

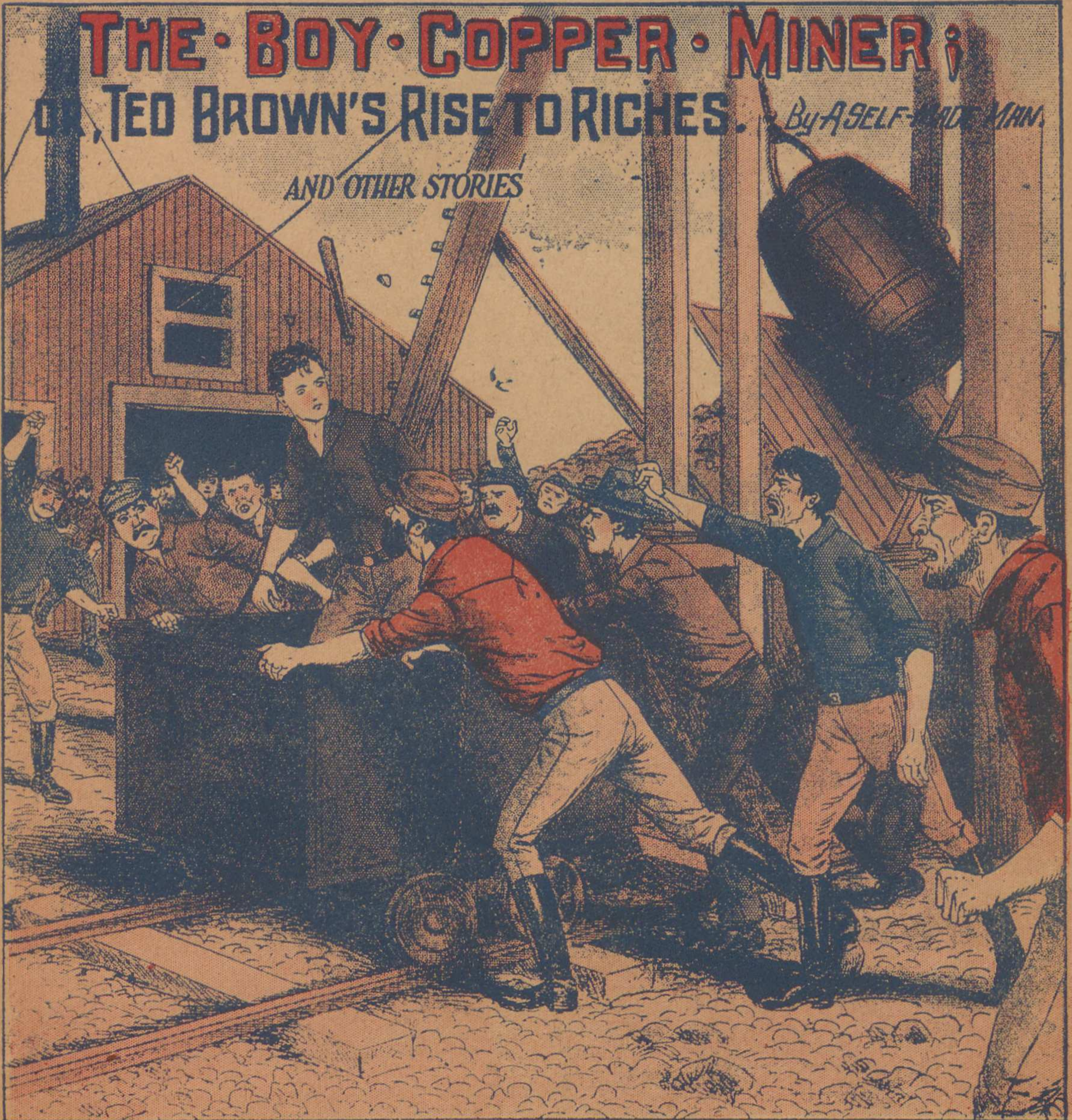
FAME & FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

THE BOY COPPER MINER; OR, TED BROWN'S RISE TO RICHES.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



In spite of his resistance Ted Brown was lifted into the car and tied there. Then the angry copper miners proceeded to push the car away from the mouth of the shaft toward the incline leading to the river.

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The Boy Copper Miner

OR, TED BROWN'S RISE TO RICHES

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Bully of the Mine.

"Gee! But I'm glad work is over for the day. I'm about fagged out."

Thus spoke Ted Brown, a sturdy, good-looking boy, with a deeply tanned countenance, as a shrill whistle resounded through the narrow, rugged tunnel, deep down in the ground, where a group of copper miners, each with a small lamp in the front of his hat and a pickaxe or shovel in his hand, were following up the operations of a power drill that was boring a way further and further from the perpendicular main shaft which led up two hundred feet or more to the surface of the earth. Ted had been working in the Lookout copper mine near Carson, Montana, for about three months, and in that short time he had learned what it was to hustle for a living. He had been born and brought up on a small farm in Petersville, Iowa, and knew what it was to labor by the sweat of his brow during the busy season; but hard as he had found farm work it was to a certain extent child's play beside copper mining in the dark and noisome regions underground.

He had come West four months before to look up a piece of property in the vicinity of Carson which had been left him by his late uncle, Hiram Brown. As he was under age his mother held it in trust for him. Soon after the property had come to him Ted read in the papers about the new discoveries of copper ore in Montana. Learning that there were copper mines in operation in the neighborhood of his property, he began to figure that there might be copper on his ground as well. If there was he felt that he was in line to become a rich boy. The more he thought the matter over the more eager he became to investigate the question for himself. Not without difficulty he persuaded his mother to let him go West in order to satisfy his curiosity. He brought a copy of the deed and the official survey of his property with him, and after reaching Carson he found no trouble in locating his land, which had been duly recorded in his name a short time before.

He spent a couple of weeks making inquiries among the denizens of the wild and woolly district around Carson, but nobody could throw any light on the character of his ground beneath the surface. So far as its upper crust went, he could

see that for himself. In extent it measured several acres, was more or less uneven, having a decided elevation at one point, and was sparsely wooded. A deep creek, that some people would have called a small river, formed its eastern boundary, and ran southward for a mile, when it emptied into one of Montana's numerous big streams. Ted found that the ground would have to be thoroughly prospected by an expert before any reliable opinion could be passed on the copper question. This would cost money, and Ted had no money to spend on such an investigation.

Having reached the end of his tether, most boys would have turned around and gone back home. Ted, however, was different from most boys. He was a lad of grit and determination. Having got the idea into his crop that there was copper on his property, he determined to remain West and push the matter to a finish. Not being overburdened with cash, it was necessary for him to get a job in order for him to pay his way. He had the choice between going into a store in Carson or tackling copper mining. He chose the latter because, though the work was infinitely harder, he would gain a whole lot of practical experience in a line he was deeply interested in. So he applied for work at the Lookout mine and was employed. After making the remark with which this chapter opens, Ted slung his shovel over his shoulder and turned his dirt-begrimed face toward the main shaft, where a stout wooden cage attached to a wire cable was waiting to carry the day shift in sections to the surface above.

"Hello, Ted; glad you're alive?" asked a boy of about his own age who had been working in the same tunnel, and was waiting to accompany him to the main shaft.

"That's about all I am, Jesse," replied Ted, as they started along together.

Ted and Jesse Dane had become sworn friends since the first few days of the former's employment in the mine. Jesse was an orphan, the son of a miner who had lost his life in the Lookout mine a year since. He had worked long enough underground to be quite experienced at the business, and his advice and assistance proved of great value to Ted during his first weeks on the job.

"Tired, eh?" grinned Jesse.

"I should say I am! It's been a hard day."

"I don't see that there's much difference between one day and another. They're all hard enough. The copper we dig out by the sweat of our brows makes some fortunate people richer even while they're living on the fat of the land and enjoying themselves. Sunday is the only time we have for rest and recreation, and there isn't a whole lot of pleasure to be found in this neighborhood."

"That's right, there isn't. Well, maybe some day I'll be rich myself."

"You're always thinking about that land of yours."

"Why not? You agree with me that there may be copper in the ground. The whole region around here is said to be more or less affected by the veins of ore."

"I've advised you to talk with the superintendent on the subject. He might interest the owners of this mine so far that they might be induced to have your ground prospected. If it showed outcroppings of the ore they'd buy it from you at a good price."

"Of course they'd buy it if they had some evidence of the presence of copper ore on it; but they wouldn't give anything near what it was worth in that case. It might prove to be a valuable copper mine, worth a million or more, but I'd come in for a mighty small share of its real value. These copper barons are out for everything in sight, and as they have the coin behind them they have a bulge on the situation."

"That isn't any lie, I'll admit," replied Jesse, as they walked up to a crowd of men awaiting their turn to be lifted up the shaft.

The cage came down and a rush was made to get into it. Jesse sprang in and Ted was following, and had got one leg over the side, when a big, surly-looking miner named Tug Ralston grabbed him by the shoulder, pulled him forcibly back, and coolly took his place. Those in the cage regarded this wanton act with evident disapproval. It was might against right, and not according to their code of honor.

"What did you do that for, Tug Ralston?" demanded Ted indignantly.

"Because it suited me," grunted the stalwart miner.

"You wouldn't do it to one of your size, you big bully," cried Ted, who was hot under the collar over the act.

"Don't you give me none of your sass, young feller, or I'll wring your neck," answered Ralston menacingly.

"You won't wring my neck—not if I know it," replied Ted pluckily.

"Won't I?" snarled the man.

He hauled back and deliberately struck Ted in the face with the palm of his horny hand. Ted staggered back from the force of the blow, then as the signal was given to hoist away he rushed forward and smashed Ralston a blow in the eye with the full force of his fist, and Ted's fist was not a soft one, either. The man uttered an imprecation and made a spring to reach the boy. Ted eluded his grasp, though he reached far over the side of the cage. At that moment the cage started with a jerk, Ralston lost his balance and fell out head first, taking a drop of a dozen feet. The ground was much harder than his cranium, and so the shock deprived him of consciousness. Neither Ted nor the men who were yet to go up

felt much sympathy for the bully. He was not generally liked, except possibly by two or three cronies who associated with him, and who found it to their interest to stand in with him. The incident was regarded as rather serious by the men, who knew the implacable side of the ruffian's character.

"I'm afraid you've put your foot in it, my lad," said a brawny miner. "You'll find that you've made an enemy of Ralston, and he's a bad man to be up against."

"I don't care," replied Ted. "I won't let him or anybody else sit on my neck."

"You're a plucky chap," said the miner, favoring Ted with an admiring look. "We all agree that Ralston had no right to pull you out of the cage, but that won't mend matters. Tug is accustomed to do pretty much as he pleases, for nobody cares to quarrel with him. He's known to be quarrelsome and vindictive when opposed. Let me advise you to steer clear of him, and at the same time be on your guard. He'd just as soon strike you behind your back as not, even if you're only a boy. If the matter is reported to the superintendent I wouldn't be surprised if Ralston was discharged. I've heard that the super has only been waiting for an excuse to get rid of him ever since he sent one of the men to the doctor with a fractured skull from a blow with his shovel. He claimed it was an accident, but there are reasons for believing it was done deliberately. However, as the man died and the case couldn't be proved against him nothing was done; but he's regarded as an eye-sore at the mine."

No one tried to bring Ralston to his senses. He was propped up against one of the tunnel walls and allowed to remain there till the cage came down again, when he was lifted into it.

"Get in, my lad," said the miner.

Ted got in, the rest followed and they were soon brought up to the mouth of the shaft.

CHAPTER II.—A Run-in With Tug Ralston on the Street.

Jesse Dane was waiting near the mouth of the shaft for Ted to come up. He and Ted roomed together in the same house on the suburb of Carson about half a mile from the mine. A dozen of the single men boarded there also. The place was called the "Miners' Rest," and the front room on the ground floor was fitted up as a saloon. The dining-room was just behind, with the kitchen in the rear. The rudely furnished sleeping-rooms were on the two floors above.

"Is he dead?" asked Jesse, observing the ghastly look on Tug Ralston's face as the fellow was lifted from the cage and borne to one of the sheds close by.

"No such luck," growled one of the miners, who privately detested the bully. "The roof of the mine would have to fall on him to give him his quietus."

"You had a great nerve to hit him the way you did," said Jesse to Ted. "He'll be down on you after this like a thousand of brick."

"I can't help that," replied Ted. "He struck me a cowardly blow and I gave him back as good."

"He'll get square with you some way, I'm afraid," said Jesse, shaking his head.

"I'll watch out that he doesn't."

"You'll have to keep your eyes skinned all the time."

"I mean to. I know what he is."

"He killed a man in the mine seven months ago."

"So I heard. Fractured his skull with his shovel."

"He said it was done by accident, but the men think differently."

"He ought to have been discharged on general principles, for he carries things with a pretty high hand."

"I guess the super doesn't care to have a run-in with him."

"The men seem a bit afraid of him."

"They are. They don't care to make an enemy of him."

"I suppose I have."

"There isn't much doubt about that."

"He's the biggest man in the mine. Only a coward and a cur of his size would try to get back at a boy like me."

"That's what he is."

"If he tackles me I'll do my best to defend myself."

"You won't stand much chance if he goes for you."

"I wish I had a gun. I'd be justified in using it against him."

"If I were you I'd buy a small revolver in Carson tonight. If he attacked you and you shot him nothing would be done to you."

"I'd be put in jail and would have to prove that I did it in self-defense."

"I guess you could prove that easily enough. His size and reputation would be in your favor."

"I don't like the idea of being obliged to shoot even such a brute as Tug Ralston."

"Better that than be killed yourself."

"Would he dare go as far as that? It would go pretty hard with him I think if he did me up."

"I guess it would, but that wouldn't do you any good. It's best to be on the safe side."

"I don't intend to let the matter worry me, at any rate. He doesn't work in our tunnel, so I don't think he'll be able to take any advantage of me below. The men wouldn't let him attack me openly."

"He'll lay for you above ground."

"I won't let him get near me if I can help it."

"I'll stand by you. We'll go about together as we usually do, anyway. He'll have to tackle both of us if he wants to reach you."

"Thanks, Jesse. I know you'll do what you can for me."

"Bet your life I will."

They had now reached their boarding-house, so they hurried in to wash up and then go to supper. The long table was crowded, but their places were waiting for them. Two rosy-cheeked young women acted as waitresses. Ted was a favorite with both of them, but Maggie Moss, the smaller of the two, regarded him as her especial property, for she always waited on the boys.

"Hello, Maggie; how's things?" said Ted, as he took his seat.

"Lovely," she replied with a smile.

"So are you," grinned Ted.

"No compliments, please. There's oxtail and vegetable soup tonight—which will you have?"

"Give me the oxtail."

Jesse said he'd have the same, and the girl presently brought two platefuls.

"Roast beef or boiled mutton with capers?" asked the girl.

"Mutton for me," answered Ted, and again Jesse said the same for him.

Coffee followed and the meal wound up with rice pudding full of raisins. The boys ate heartily and left the table feeling good. They got their hats and took a stroll into Carson. There were a couple of dance halls in the town, and a vaudeville show which commenced at eight o'clock. Of plain saloons there were a-plenty, and all were well patronized after dark. There was a Methodist church and a Catholic chapel. An entertainment, a quarter admission, had been announced to take place that evening in the basement of the former. It consisted of moving pictures descriptive of Oriental lands, interspersed with music furnished by a phonograph. Ted and Jesse decided to take it in.

The show proved to be well worth the money, and the boys enjoyed it very much indeed. It was over at ten o'clock. When they came out of the church and walked back toward their boarding-house they found the saloons on their way in full blast. As they passed one of them Tug Ralston, with his head bound up, came out with two of his cronies. He was pretty well loaded, but not so drunk but he recognized Ted. With a howl of concentrated rage he made a spring for the boy. He would have caught Ted, who did not notice him in time, but for Jesse. Young Dane dropped in front of Ralston and the ruffian fell over him just as his fingers clutched Ted by the shoulder. Tug rolled into the gutter, swearing furiously.

Scrambling to his feet he drew a revolver from his hip pocket and aimed it at Jesse as the boy was getting up. Ted, seeing his friend's peril, sprang forward and struck up the drunken rascal's arm just as the revolver exploded. The ball went through the rim of the hat of one of his cronies, and then smashed a pane in the saloon window. Ted grabbed his wrist to prevent him using the weapon again. Jesse piled in to help Ted. A crowd of excited men poured out of the saloon. Ralston, with a powerful swing, flung both boys from him, and fired at Ted, missing his head by the fraction of an inch. Before he could repeat the performance half a dozen men flung themselves upon the ruffian, tripped him up and pinned him to the ground. The revolver was taken from him, and one of the town officers coming up he was carried raving like a madman to the lock-up, but it took four men in addition to the officer to land him there. Next morning he got thirty days' confinement and a fine from the magistrate. In addition he was discharged from the mine, to the great satisfaction of the two boys, as well as the miners in general.

CHAPTER III.—Saved in the Nick of Time.

During the thirty days that Tug Ralston was confined in jail, Ted and Jesse each Sunday visited the Brown property and prospected it on their own hook. They were looking for outcroppings of copper ore. For three Sundays their search was unsuccessful, but on the fourth, while

prying into a break on the hillside, Jesse found undoubted signs of ore in the ground.

"There's a vein of ore in this hill or I don't know what I'm talking bout," said Dane, after critically examining several specimens he had knocked into sections.

"Are you sure of that?" asked Ted excitedly.

"Sure as we stand here."

"Then I'll be right in it."

"Yes, that's a fact, and I wish I was right in it, too."

"So you shall be, Jesse," cried Ted impulsively. "Whatever I make out of this property above its ordinary appraised value you shall have a share of. You're my friend and comrade, and as such you shall be a gainer by any prosperity that comes to me."

"Do you mean that, Ted?" asked Jesse, with sparkling eyes.

"I do. You don't think I'd be so mean as to go back on you."

"No, but still I haven't any right to expect to gain anything out of your land."

"Why, aren't you prospecting it for me?"

"I'm doing the best I can in that direction."

"Of course you are. It would be a good while before I could be competent to do the thing myself. You have also taken an interest in my affairs, and have encouraged me right along when older people have practically turned me down on the question of copper. If we find a copper mine on this ground I'll see that you come in for a square deal."

Crack! Zip! The piece of ore Ted held in his hand flew a yard away. The first sound was the report of a revolver, and the second the contact of a bullet with the ore. Both boys cast a startled glance in the direction of the report. They saw a little curl of smoke rising from the far end of the cleft in the hill where they were standing. In another moment a face appeared framed in the bushes—the face of Tug Ralston, looking more disreputable than ever. He had been released from jail that morning and advised to make himself scarce. That afternoon he had learned from one of his cronies that the boys had been seen going into the hills with a prospector's outfit, and after borrowing a revolver he started out to trail them. After trudging around for two hours he came upon the boys in the cut. Then he whipped out his weapon and fired at Ted. The boys were surprised as well as aghast at the unexpected appearance of the rascal.

"Tug Ralston!" cried Jesse. "And he's got a gun. What shall we do?"

The case looked rather desperate, for they were out in an unfrequented part of the country, a mile from the Lookout mine.

"Well, young fellers, I've got you where I want you," said Tug, coming from behind the rock which had concealed him. "That shot was intended to let you know that I was on hand. The next may mean somethin' different. I'm waitin' to see you both get down on your knees and beg me to let you off."

He uttered a disagreeable laugh and advanced toward them, holding his cocked weapon ready for instant use.

"What you doin'? Lookin' for copper? What good would it do you if you found it? Is the owner of this property payin' you to prospect for him?"

"Why are you molesting us? Why did you shoot? You might have hit one of us," said Ted, without showing a bit of fear, though he felt that matters were critical.

"I guessed you didn't know I was out of jail, so I thought I'd surprise you. It's a way I have sometimes when I'm feelin' good," he chuckled.

There was a wicked leer in his eyes which showed that his mirth was assumed.

"Glad to see me, ain't you, both of you? You look it," and the scoundrel laughed again, as though he thought it a good joke.

"What do you want with us?" asked Ted.

"Well, I don't want much with your friend, though he did do me dirt in front of the Mornin' Glory Saloon a month ago; but I think you and me has an account to settle, and I reckon this is about the time and place to settle it."

"Are you thinking of murdering me?" asked Ted, his blood running cold at the bare prospect of such a terrible thing.

"Murderin' you! Haw! haw! haw!" laughed the ruffian, who was playing with his intended victim like a cat does with a mouse. "If I intended doin' that wouldn't I have done it already without wastin' my jaw on you?"

"Then what do you mean to do?"

Ralston looked at him with an air of fiendish triumph.

"You can go," he said, waving his revolver at Jesse.

"Not without Ted," answered Dane.

"Go, I tell you!" roared Tug menacingly.

Jesse didn't move. Ralston walked over and struck him a blow with his fist in the forehead which stretched the boy senseless at his feet.

"Coward!" cried Ted, springing on him like a wildcat.

The ruffian turned upon him in a towering rage.

"I'll kill you, you infernal young varmint!" he gritted, dropping his revolver and seizing the boy with both of his sinewy arms.

Ted clung to him like a leech, winding both of his legs around one of Tug's, and getting his head around under his arm. For some minutes the desperate struggle continued. Ted felt that he was fighting for his life, with the chances all against him. At length the ruffian managed to pull him clear by his tremendous strength. Then he threw the boy on the ground and put one of his boots on his chest.

"Tackle me, will you, you young catamount! I guess you don't know who you're monkeying with."

He glared down at the helpless boy with malignant satisfaction. Then he removed his foot and picked up his revolver.

"What's to hinder me blowin' your brains out?" said Tug, aiming his gun at Ted's head.

His finger was on the trigger, but he didn't pull it. He enjoyed the pleasure of seeing his intended victim suffer. He studied the boy, wondering where he would shoot him first. Finally he decided that he would frighten him a bit more.

"Now, then, I give you a minute to say your prayers."

Ted opened his eyes and saw the muzzle of the revolver pointed at his head.

"You're a coward! If you kill me you'll swing for your crime."

"I'll take my chances of that. The minute is up. One—two—three!"

A flash—a report—and the ball plowed into the ground so close to the boy's ear that he could almost feel the sting of it.

"Missed you, did I?" grinned the scoundrel, who hadn't intended to hit him. "Next time I'll do better."

"I don't think you will!" said a clear, girlish voice at that moment.

Tug looked up clearly startled and found himself covered by a cocked revolver in the hand of a swarthy-looking maiden of perhaps sixteen.

CHAPTER IV.—Tess Cooke.

Ted lay still and uncertain as to the issue, but his heart thrilled with hope. He had heard the girlish voice, and there was a determined ring to it that meant business. The top of his head was toward the newcomer and he couldn't see her. He could see, however, that her words and attitude had a strong effect on Ralston.

"Drop your gun, pard," spoke the girl again, "and drop it quick. This gun of mine has a habit of going off sudden-like on occasions, and it never misses. When I see a big chap like you taking advantage of a little fellow it makes me nervous. As my finger is on the trigger, and it's a hair one, something is liable to drop in short order if you make me more nervous than I am."

Tug saw she had him dead to rights and was not to be trifled with. With a deep imprecation he let his revolver drop to the ground.

"You're sensible, pard," spoke up the girl. "Now, step back a couple of feet. Don't go too far, for something might happen if you did."

Ralston unwillingly obeyed her mandate, but then he couldn't help himself. The moment Tug moved back Ted sprang to his feet and looked at the person who had saved him. She was an uncommonly pretty girl, with a sylph-like figure, and was dressed in wild Western style, her head covered by a soft cowboy hat.

"I'm much obliged to you, miss, for helping me out," said Ted gratefully. "You saved my life, for the rascal meant to kill me."

"You're welcome, pard," replied the girl, taking the boy in from his head down with a quick, comprehensive glance. "Better pick up that gun. It will be safer in your hands than his."

Ted took possession of Ralston's weapon, and then he felt that he feared the man no longer.

"What's happened to him?" asked the girl, indicating Jesse. "Not shot, I hope?"

"No. Tug Ralston struck him down with a blow in the face with his fist."

"Oh! So this fellow's name is Tug Ralston? I've heard my dad tell of him. I ain't surprised at anything he might do."

"What is your name, miss?" asked the boy.

"Tess Cooke. What's yours?"

"Ted Brown."

"Work at the mine?"

"Yes."

"What's your pard's name?"

"Jesse Dane."

"What are you doing out here? Prospecting?"

"Yes, miss. This is my property, left me by my uncle, Jesse and I were looking to see if we could find indications of copper on it."

"Better try and bring your pard to his senses," said the girl.

Ted agreed with her. He went to a spring near by and brought the top of his hat full of water, which he threw in Jesse's face. Then he chafed the boy's temples and he presently revived.

"What happened to me?" asked Dane in a dazed way. "Who is that?" he added as his eyes rested on the girl.

"That is Miss Cooke."

"Never mind the 'miss,' pard," said the girl. "Call me Tess."

Dane then saw Tug Ralston standing against the side of the pass in sullen impotence.

"I remember everything now," he said. "Ralston struck me down with his fist."

"He won't do it again in a hurry."

"What's happened to him?"

"Tess Cooke has him nailed. See the revolver in her hand? That did the business for Ralston just as he was going to kill me."

"I've heard of her, but never saw her before."

"She's a dandy from Dandyville. She called him down so hard that he just chucked up the sponge."

"Well, pard," said Tess Cooke, "what are you going to do with this man? You've got his gun. You might amuse yourself shooting a few holes through him."

"You don't mean that, I guess," replied Ted, regarding her earnestly.

"That's what he was going to do to you when I came up and stopped him," she answered. "It's your lead now. You hold a full flush. He's played his hand and lost. If you let him go he'll pick up a gun somewhere and do you up. Better settle the game while you hold the cards."

Ted wondered if the girl really meant what she said. He thought he'd test Tug's nerve, though he didn't think the man had much.

"Tug Ralston, you meant to kill me a while ago. If I let you go you'll try to work the same game over again. I guess I'll have to shoot you to save myself."

He raised the revolver on a level with the ruffian's heart.

"Don't shoot!" gasped the man, his face turning livid. "Let me off and I'll cry quits."

"It won't pay to trust such a chap as you."

"I swear I'll let you alone after this."

"Get down on your knees and swear you'll not interfere with me in the future."

Tug obeyed, and swore in his own peculiar way that he'd let Ted alone after that.

"Jesse," said Ted, "take that bandanna out of his pocket and tie his hands behind his back."

Dane did so.

"What are you goin' to do with me?" asked Ralston.

"Take you to town and deliver you over to the sheriff," replied Ted.

The rascal glared at him, but made no reply. Ted then turned to the girl, who had put up her revolver.

"I hope you understand that I am deeply grateful to you, Miss Cooke, for saving my life," he said.

"I told you that you were welcome, pard," replied the girl with a friendly smile.

"I'd like to shake hands with you, if you don't object."

"I haven't any objection," she replied, rising from the boulder and approaching him.

They shook hands.

"I hope I'll see you again, miss," he said.

"If you want to see me you'll find me over at dad's house, a mile up the creek."

"Jesse and I'll call on you next Sunday afternoon if you'll be home."

"I'll be there if you say you'll come."

"We'll come."

Whether it was that Jesse had made a bungle of his job of tying Ralston, or that owing to his strength the handkerchief failed to hold his wrists, certain it is that Tug freed himself, and, taking advantage of the momentary inattention of the boys, made a sudden break for the end of the cut in the hill.

Jesse gave the alarm, and Ted swung around.

"Stop!" he shouted to the rascal.

The fellow paid no attention to him. Ted fired at his legs, but the bullet went a trifle wide, and before he could shoot again Ralston had disappeared around the boulder from behind which he had fired his first shot at the boys.

CHAPTER V.—Caught Unawares.

Ted rushed after him as fast as he could. When he reached the boulder he caught sight of the fleeing ruffian some little distance away. Ted fired at him again and missed as before. Ralston turned, shook his fist back at him and then plunged into a thick clump of bushes. Ted then gave up the pursuit and returned to Jesse and the girl. Tess Cooke explained how she had heard the first shot at a distance and walked over to the cut to see what was going on. Just after the second shot she came upon the scene which she had interrupted.

"It seems to me that you're a pretty nervy girl," said Ted.

"It's my way, I guess," she replied. "I've been brought up to look out for myself, and I opine that I can do it."

"I'll bet you can, as well as any man," said Jesse.

They talked with Miss Cooke for perhaps half an hour longer, and then she bade them good-by, saying she would expect to see them at her dad's place on the following Sunday. Ted and Jesse gathered together their prospecting tools and started for Carson. Both were satisfied that their search for copper had been successful at last, and they decided to pay another visit to the cut on Sunday morning, bringing their lunch, and afterward go on to the home of Tess.

"It was mighty lucky for you that that girl turned up in the nick of time to save you, Ted," remarked Jesse.

"There isn't any doubt about it. I'll never have a closer call for my life. I could read murder in that scoundrel's eyes. He meant to do me up and then skip the country, for after that it wouldn't have been safe for him to be seen in this neighborhood."

The boys reached their home without further adventures, and soon after they had cleaned themselves and spruced up a bit the supper bell rang and they went down to the dining-room. After the meal the boys went into town and called at the

residence of the sheriff of the county. He was home, and they detailed the adventure they had had with Tug Ralston.

"He was only let out this morning," said the sheriff. "He didn't lose any time getting back to his old tricks. Well, I'll look after him, and I don't figure he'll escape me unless he's already made tracks for the next county. If I get him you'll be wanted as witnesses."

"You can send to the mine for us, or to our boarding-house, the Miners' Rest," replied Ted.

"That's a right smart gal—Tess. She's the daughter of old man Cooke, a prospector and mining expert," said the sheriff. "She's accounted a dead shot, and can draw a gun quicker'n any man I ever met. I saw a specimen of her shooting at ten yards one night at the Wyoming Saloon, where she went to fetch her father, who has a periodical weakness for crooking his elbow. The old man didn't want to go home with her, and the gang who had him in tow backed him up. She drew her gun on the ringleader, but he only laughed at her, and said he guessed she was only good to be kissed, and he calculated he'd honor her by giving her the first smack. 'I'll show you what I'm good for,' she said in a tone that rang business. 'Tack a five-spot on that wall yonder, and if I don't nail every pip square in the centre you can keep my father here and kiss me into bargain.' 'Done!' replied the chap. 'If you win the old man goes with you.' 'I guess he will,' she replied coolly, 'for I'm going to keep one shot for the man that tries to prevent me taking him.' Somebody put the card against the wall and the crowd looked for fun. Well, blame me if that gal didn't plunk that card in five seconds with five balls, every one as true as a die. The crowd was paralyzed. Then she called her old man and told him to walk. 'Has anyone got any objections?' she asked, looking around with her smoking gun in her hand. Nobody had, and so she led the old man away, and since that day the whole town takes its hat off to Tess Cooke."

"I don't wonder Tug Ralston gave in when he saw who he was up against," laughed Ted. "How came she to learn to shoot so good?"

"I'll never tell you. It comes natural to her."

"Tess Cooke seems to be a corker," said Ted to Jesse on their way home.

"She is, for fair. I've heard a whole lot about her since I've been in the mine, but today is the first time I've seen her."

The ensuing week passed away all too slowly for Ted. He was continually thinking about Tess Cooke, and the visit he and Jesse were pledged to pay her on the following Sunday afternoon. As the days passed no word came from the sheriff with respect to Tug Ralston.

"The rascal must have left the district," Ted said to Jesse, as they were on their way to their boarding-house after work.

"Sure thing," replied his friend. "If he hadn't Sheriff King would have nabbed him before this."

"It's a good thing he's lit out. I should never feel quite easy while he was about. He has it in for me good and hard, and under those circumstances I have no wish to meet him at a disadvantage again."

"What does your mother say about you staying out here?"

"She doesn't like it. She's always begging me to come back home. Says she misses me terri-

bly. That I'm her only boy, and so on. I tell her to have patience. I wrote her Sunday night that we had found every indication of copper on my property, and that in my next I hoped to be able to assure her of the fact beyond any reasonable doubt."

At length Sunday came around, but it brought an unexpected change of program. Jesse met with an accident in the mine Saturday afternoon, and the doctor said he'd have to stay in bed for several days till his leg mended. Ted would have postponed his trip to the cut on his property only for the fact that he was impatient to see Tess Cooke.

The girl was on his brain and nothing would satisfy him but he must keep his engagement. Under those circumstances he decided that he might as well look in at the cut on his way over to her home on the creek. So he took a few of the tools after dinner, bade Jesse good-by and started. He reached his property and made his way to the cut. There he spent an hour picking up specimens which he intended to take over and submit to Miss Cooke's father's inspection. He was an old experienced prospector, and his judgement on the ore was to be relied on.

Ted filled his bag with bits of the ore he secured from the cut and then started for the creek. His way took him through a wood, and the afternoon being warm, he sat down to rest himself for a while. While lolling in the shade of a big tree with a thick, round trunk he examined his specimens with a feeling of satisfaction.

"There is copper in these rocks beyond doubt. Plenty of it. I know what copper ore is by this time. I see enough of it every day, goodness knows. If I ever get to be president of a copper company I'll be able to talk facts from practical experience. Some day the papers may have something to say about me—that is, if I become one of the copper barons. Something after this fashion: 'Theodore Brown, the wealthy copper king, was once on a time a boy copper miner. He——'" Ted didn't get any further with his castle-building.

He suddenly heard a noise in the bushes in front of him, and looking in that direction he saw to his dismay the villainous-looking countenance of Tug Ralston within a couple of rods of the spot where he sat.

CHAPTER VI.—Treed By The Enemy

Ted sprang to his feet with extraordinary agility, but Tug had seen him and was evidently prepared for the encounter.

"Stop where you are!" he roared in a hoarse, snappish voice, raising himself and covering Ted with a rifle. "If you move an eye-lid I'll drill you quicker'n a flash of lightning." The boy realizing that he was in a bad box, made no further movement, but watched his enemy with a wary eye. Ralston looked cool and impudent as he stood there gloating over the situation.

"I guess I've got you at last, Ted Brown," he growled. "I've been waitin' a week for the chance, but I knew it would come, for I counted on that visit you was goin' to pay to that she-cat who saved your life last Sunday. Well, she

won't save you this time, you can gamble on it. Lightnin' don't strike twice in the same place. Ted looked at the rascal with critical attention. The boy was rapidly revolving some plan in his mind that would help him to escape his vindictive pursuer. In order to gain time he opened up a conversation.

"I guess you're joking, Ralston, aren't you? You swore not to interfere with me hereafter."

"S'pose I did. I've changed my mind since."

"But an oath is an oath. You've no right to go back on that."

"I've a right to do as I please."

"I s'pose that's the reason you've been letting your beard grow."

"Don't you worry about my beard. I shaved before you was born, and I sha'n't again till you are dead; but I guess I won't have to wait long, for you ain't got more than three minutes to draw you breath."

"How long?"

"Three minutes."

"Do you mean to say you're going to shoot me?"

"If I said I wasn't I'd be the worst liar on two feet," replied Ralston grimly.

"Don't you know that would be deliberate murder?"

"Well, it won't be the fir—the three minutes are up. If you'll shut up and say your prayers I'll give you two more." Ted looked into that hard, relentless eye, but there was not the slightest indication of any change of purpose.

"Do you think it's a brave act to shoot a boy?"

"Shut up and say your prayers if you mean to; but I don't believe the prayers of a kid like you amount to much," replied Ralston with a sneer. Ted's object had been try and distract Ralston's attention so that he might dart behind the trunk of the big tree at the foot of which he had been sitting; but in this he failed, for Tug never for a moment took his eyes off him. As a last desperate resort Ted adopted an old, threadbare ruse. It required good acting on the boy's part to make it pass muster, but as his life was at stake he threw his whole soul into it.

"Quick, Jesse!" he shouted earnestly, looking straight behind Tug, as if he saw his friend in the bushes; "hit him!" Tug Ralston was deceived and thrown off his guard. He swung around to ward off a threatened rear attack, but saw nobody there, nor did he hear the slightest sound in the bushes. Then he realized he had been deceived by Ted. With a terrible imprecation he turned back again, only to find that his victim had disappeared. Ted had slipped behind the tree, which was wide enough to conceal him completely.

Ralston was deeply chagrined at the march the boy had played on him, and he swore like a trooper. His first impression was that the boy had rushed for the bushes and hid himself, and he prepared to start after him. A moment's reflection altered that view. There was quite an open space around and behind the tree, and the ruffian calculated that Ted could not have covered it and vanished in the short space of time his ruse had given him. The only other refuge

in sight was the tree, and there he judged the boy was hiding.

"I'm on to you, Ted Brown," he growled with a ring of satisfaction in his tones. "Come out from behind that tree." Ted refused to accept the invitation.

"All right, youngster, if you won't come out I'll have to go there and blow your roof off." Thus speaking, Ralston moved toward the tree. Ted's ruse would only have gained him a few minutes of life but for the fact that on this occasion he was armed. He had taken the precaution, on general principals, to fetch Ralston's revolver along. It was fortunate, indeed, that he had done so.

Ted heard heavy footsteps in the grass and stood with the cocked weapon in his hand awaiting the climax of the desperate adventure. He didn't dare look around the tree to see how close Ralston was lest such an exposure of his person might lead to fatal results. Nor could he tell which side the scoundrel was coming. He could only trust to luck. Ralston, however, made a bad mistake at this point. He stopped and spoke again when within a yard of the tree.

"I'll give you one more chance to come out and five minutes to say your prayers," he said. Ted, hastily taking note of the location of the voice, thrust his revolver around the tree and fired. A howl of pain and rage followed the shot. Ralston, slightly wounded by the bullet, hurriedly retreated to the bushes, where Ted could hear him swearing and growling like some disappointed wild beast.

Ted, however, had only checked, not defeated him. The villain, having a wholesome respect for a weapon in another person's hand, kept under cover of the bushes and waited for Ted to do something. As nothing happened for full five minutes, which seemed an age to him, he began to grow impatient. He wondered angrily how long Ted proposed to remain behind the tree. While he was snarling under his breath at the lapse of time a brilliant idea occurred to his mind. He wondered why he had not thought of it before.

With a grim smile at his own astuteness he rose from his crouching position and began to circle around the tree. He calculated that when he reached a certain point of the circle he would be able to see Ted behind the tree. It was impossible for him to carry out this plan in complete silence. Ted's sharp ears heard the rustling of the dried branches beneath his tread, and the occasional snapping of a twig. As he listened the sound at length told him that the man was trying to outflank him.

As soon as Ted realized this move on his adversary's part he began to move an inch at a time in the reverse direction. In this way he was able to easily defeat Ralston's tactics, which were singularly deficient in range, for nothing but a surprise could make them successful. While the rascal was moving a hundred rods to secure his position, Ted could foil him by taking a single step. In the course of a short time Ralston discovered that he was not so bright as he thought he was. Finally, fully satisfied that his strategy was a failure, he squatted down again in the bushes to await a demonstration on the part of his victim.

Ted finding that his enemy had grown tired of pursuing an unprofitable game, remained where he was. While he listened intently for any sounds that might indicate a new move on Ralston's part, Ted kept up a lively train of thought. He knew his enemy was watching the opposite side of the tree with great intentness, and the happy thought occurred to him to try to draw the man's fire by a bit of strategy which was as old as the hills. He had read of the scheme in some boy's book where it had worked successfully. He wondered if he couldn't dupe Ralston by it. Slipping off his jacket he rolled it up so as to form the resemblance of a head. Placing his cap upon the top of the bundle he cautiously exposed the dummy on one side of the tree, withdrawing it suddenly two or three times to increase the delusion in the mind of the enemy.

At first no results followed, and Ted began to think that Ralston was not fooled this way. After repeating the operation several times he slowly pushed the dummy around the opposite side of the tree. The crack of Ralston's rifle broke the silence of the wood, and Ted felt the blow of the ball when it struck the cap. The critical moment had come, and without loss of a second Ted left the security of the tree and darted off in the direction of the creek.

CHAPTER VII.—Future Events Cast Their Shadows Before

Ralston uttered a yell of rage on perceiving that his shot had failed of results, and he started after the boy as fast as he could. Although strong and big he was no match for Ted as a runner. Seeing that his victim was bound to get away, Tug stopped, shoved another cartridge into his gun, dropped on one knee and fired just as Ted vanished around a clump of bushes.

The bullet passed within a yard of the boy, who kept on till he reached the creek. Then he ran up stream for a quarter of a mile, when he saw a neatly-built story-and-a-half house; in a few minutes he was knocking smartly on the door, while he kept his eyes over his shoulder on the lookout for Ralston. The door was opened by Tess Cooke, and Ted staggered inside and sank down exhausted by the run and the tense excitement through which he had just passed.

"What's the matter, Ted Brown?" asked Tess in some concern.

"I was nearly shot by Tug Ralston," gasped the boy, as he tried to pull himself together.

"By Tug Ralston!" cried the girl. "I thought —"

"He had skipped the neighborhood? Well, he's fooled the sheriff and everybody else into that belief. He's been in hiding—waiting to catch me today when I called on you. He heard Jesse and me make the arrangement with you last Sunday afternoon at the cut, and he kept it in mind. This time he's got a rifle."

"A rifle!"

"Yes. I wouldn't have cared so much if it had only been a revolver, for I had one myself, and am not afraid to meet him on even terms; but a rifle put all the advantage of the situation in his hands. He caught me off my guard and had

me dead to rights. He could easily have killed me while we stood talking."

"What prevented him?"

"The same thing that held him off in the cut long enough for you to come up and save me—his desire to play with me before he did me up. He wanted me to suffer the anticipation of coming death. Well, I foiled him with an old trick."

Ted then told the story of his strenuous adventure to the girl. She heard him in silence, expressed her sympathy for him and then went outside to the kitchen where her father was smoking and reading a magazine. She brought him into the room and introduced Ted to him.

"Now tell your story over again to father," she said. The boy did so. The old man knitted his brow during the recital.

"Then he knew that you were bound here?" he said. Ted nodded.

"He'll lay for you when you start to return. But don't be alarmed. Tess and I will see that you get back to town all right, and the sheriff shall be notified that the rascal is hanging around here trying to get back at you." Ted soon got over his scare and passed several hours very pleasantly with the girl and her father. He had supper with them, as a matter of course, and during the meal the young copper miner told old man Cooke about his property and the plain evidences he had found of copper in the ground.

"I brought a bag of specimens to show you, Mr. Cooke, but left it under the tree where Ralston attacked me." Ted described the tree and told the prospector he would find the bag there if he looked for it during the week.

"I should like to have you examine the specimens and tell me what you think about them. I should also like you to go to the cut on my property some time when you have the time and look at what my friend Jesse says is the beginning of a vein of copper ore. Whatever trouble you are put to I'll make it all right with you."

"Dad will do it for you without charging you a cent," spoke up Tess. When Ted said he guessed that it was time for him to go, Tess and her father got ready to accompany him. The old man got his boat out and the three slipped quietly down the creek to a point below Ted's property. Then they cut across the country, passing close to the Lookout mine, and left Ted at the door of his boarding-house.

He thanked them both, especially Tess, for their kindness, and accepted an invitation to call at their house soon again. Next morning the sheriff was informed about the incident in which Ted had nearly lost his life the preceding afternoon, and calling a larger force of deputies together, the posse started to beat the neighborhood up with a view of capturing Tug Ralston. The rascal, anticipating such a move, took time by the forelock and disappeared, and the strictest search proved unfruitful. Of course Jesse was surprised and much concerned when Ted related his adventure.

"That villain seems determined to get you," said Jesse. "He's taken a fearful grouch against you on account of that little incident in the mine. It would have been better if you had not resented his act of pulling you out of the car. You had to wait for the next cage, anyhow. I'm mighty sorry that the fall he got on his head

didn't kill him. It would have been a good ridance if he had been planted in a cemetery. As it is, you'll never feel thoroughly safe until he's shot or put behind the bars for a long term."

Ted agreed with him, and after that he made a point always to carry his revolver. On the following Sunday Ted and Jesse went over to call on Tess. The girl gave Ted a particularly warm welcome. Old man Cooke also showed a friendly attitude toward the boy. It soon developed that he had been over Ted's property and had made investigations that prove beyond doubt that there was a rich lead of copper ore on the boy's land.

"If you want me to bring the facts to the notice of the officers of the Lookout mine you're bound to get a good offer for your ground. I should say that it will not be under \$100,000." Ted's heart jumped with satisfaction, and Jesse's eyes sparkled. After supper, while the prospector and Jesse were arguing some matter connected with mines and mining, Ted and Tess slipped outside and took a quiet stroll along the bank of the creek.

It is not necessary to record what they said to each other on that occasion, as it wouldn't interest the reader, but there is no doubt that the conversation and the walk proved very satisfactory to themselves. Ted made the most of his opportunity to make himself solid with the girl, and she exercised all her fascinations upon him, so that when the time came for them to part they had a warmer feeling for each other than that of brother and sister.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Disappearance of Tess Cooke.

Several weeks passed away and nothing more was heard from Tug Ralston. Every Sunday Ted and Jesse walked over to the Cooke home together and took supper, after which Tess and Tedd invariably disappeared together. Jesse didn't say anything, neither did the old man. Both seemed to understand how the wind blew. If the prospector had any objection the boys did not hear of it. At any rate it wouldn't have counted much, for Tess ran the ranch, and whatever she said or did was law with her father.

Although the sheriff was of the opinion that Tug Ralston was a long way from the neighborhood of Carson, such, however, was not the case. He was hiding not many miles north of the Lookout mine. His retreat was an underground cavern in the midst of a thick wood. Entrance to it was to be had through a hollow trunk of one of the giants of the forest. Tug discovered it one day by accident. While trying to throw the sheriff's posse off his scent he entered a thick clump of bushes, and while squeezing himself as far back as possible he found an aperture in the outer bark of the tree big enough for a man to pass through. He lost no time taking advantage of this refuge, but as the interior of the tree was dark as pitch he did not notice there was a big hole there, through which he tumbled before he knew what had happened to him.

When he recovered his wits he struck a match

to find out what kind of a trap he had fallen into. To his amazement he found himself in a subterranean room which was evidently the work of man. The place had been dug out and roofed with boards braced like the tunnel of a mine. It was divided into two sections by a bulkhead, with an opening for communication. The floor and walls were of earth, beaten hard.

Tug found rude wooden benches, a rough table, capable of seating a dozen men, a supply of pots, pans and other cooking utensils, quite an outfit of coarse crockery piled up in a cheap-looking closet with shelves, a small keg nearly full of whisky, a rifle (the same that he used subsequently against Ted), a cartridge belt, and various other things of a miscellaneous nature.

"I can lie here as snug as a bug in a rug for as long as I please and the sheriff will never smoke me out," he said to himself in a tone of satisfaction. "All I need is grub, and I guess I'll be able to pick up a supply of that, while there's whisky enough here to last me six months or more. I call this a regular find. I'm safer here than if I was in the next State."

Looking into the next room, he found a dozen litters of straw, each covered with a pair of army blankets. This was the bedroom of the gang that built the cavern.

"By jingo!" he ejaculated, with a grin. "This is as good as a cheap hotel."

There were farms not so far away, upon which Ralston descended in the dead of night and supplied himself with eggs, poultry, and even a sheep. As time passed he began to figure again on getting back at Ted Brown. He also felt a strong resentment against Tess Cooke because she rescued Ted from his clutches. He would have liked to get square with her, too, but he knew her reputation as a pistol expert and a fearless girl, and was afraid to tackle her. Tess had the habit of taking long walks or rides around the country. One day she rode out to visit a girl friend who lived on a farm not far from the wood where Ralston's subterranean retreat was situated. On her way back home she skirted the wood. Tug happened to be airing himself above ground at the time and saw her coming. He shrank back among the bushes so that she would not recognize him. He didn't dare molest her, for he knew she carried her revolver with her, and he had no desire to stop a bit of cold lead. The girl and her mare were nearly opposite to him when a dog suddenly burst through a thicket and sprang barking at the horse.

The animal, taken by surprise, shied, and the girl, though a fine rider, was thrown to the ground. The shock partly stunned her. Ralston saw his advantage and availed himself of it. He sprang forward, took the revolver from the small holster attached by a belt around her back, then gagged and bound the girl with his own handkerchief and hers. Seizing her in his arms he quickly carried her to the hollow tree, down the rope ladder, and threw her on one of the straw beds. There he left her to recover her senses. An hour later the mare turned up at the Cooke home. The old prospector knew at once that something was wrong. He hardly believed that his daughter had been thrown by the animal. It was his impression that somebody, probably two or three men, had attacked her unawares, and after robbing her of the few dollars she always carried,

had let her go to find her way home on foot. After waiting an hour for her to turn up he started to look her up, taking the road he knew she had followed to go to the Golding farm.

Finding no trace of her anywhere, he kept on to the farm. There he learned that she had started for home several hours before. His anxiety over her was so great that the farmer and two of his help mounted horses and accompanied him back. They looked everywhere along the route that she was believed to have taken, but found no signs of her. When they reached the cottage it was dark and silent, just as the prospector had left it. Old man Cooke was now seriously alarmed for his child. He and the farm people rode back and scoured the country for hours without result. The disappearance of Tess was a great mystery, and her father had never been so broken up before, unless it was when his wife died some years since.

CHAPTER IX.—In Which Ted Finds Tess

It was late Saturday afternoon that Tess Cooke disappeared, and next morning the news was known in town. The sheriff was a particular friend of old man Cooke, so the prospector appealed to him to help find his daughter. The officer called his friends together and off they went to the neighborhood where the girl had vanished. Ted heard the news about the middle of the forenoon.

"Say, Jesse," he cried, rushing up to his chum, his face ablaze with anxiety and excitement, "I've just learned that something has happened to Tess Cooke."

"Something happened to her!" ejaculated Jesse.

"They say she's disappeared, and her old man is crazy about her."

"Why, where could she disappear to?"

"That's what is bothering her father. Get your coat on; we must go out to his house and find out if this report is really true. I couldn't rest a minute if anything has happened to her."

"You think a whole lot of her, don't you, Ted?"

"Bet your life I do. Why shouldn't I, when she saved my life?"

"You'd be willing to save hers, too, if that was necessary."

"I guess I would. I'd go through fire and water for her."

Ted set a hot pace, and inside of an hour they reached the Cooke home. They found the old man and several men who had just returned from unsuccessful search. In a few words the prospector told the boys the little he knew about the disappearance of his daughter. He also told them about the close search he and several men had made of the country, and how the sheriff and a considerable force were still at it.

"You can't tell just where she might have met with an accident, can you?" said Ted.

"No, but she disappeared somewhere between here and the Golding farm."

Ted asked where the Golding farm lay, and then he and Jesse started off in that direction. When they reached the wood they stopped to rest, and as luck would have it Ted sat on the grass in the very spot where the girl was thrown. While fanning himself with his hat he saw some-

thing sparkle in the grass. He picked it up and looked at it. He recognized it at once as the locket containing his picture which he had lately given to Tess.

"Look here!" he cried to his chum. "Tess has been here. This locket belongs to her. I gave it to her last Sunday. See where the thin chain snapped off? We must hunt around here. If she was thrown by her mare and hurt she may have crawled some little distance in the grass, and then been unable to go further. You hunt in that direction and I'll take this."

The boys started to search the immediate neighborhood with great zeal, and gradually became separated. Ted's course took him close by the great hollow oak. His sharp eyes detected that the grass and earth thereabout were well trampled by heavy boots. He also found a small piece of Tess's dress hanging to a sharp twig.

"Looks as if she was overpowered and carried off by some men," he muttered. "They seem to have passed through these bushes."

He worked his way in that direction and presently came face to face with the opening in the tree.

"This old tree appears to be hollow," he breathed. "Can it be that the scoundrels killed the girl and shoved her body in there?"

His heart stood still at the bare supposition of such a thing. He looked in at the opening, but could see nothing. Then he flashed a match inside. He perceived at once the hole leading downward through the roots. He lighted a second match and held it down the hole. His astonished eyes lighted on the rope ladder, swinging against the wall. Evidently it was there to afford communication with the bottom of the hole. There must be some reason for that fact. While Ted was wondering what the meaning of it all was the match expired in his fingers.

"Looks to me as if there was a pit or cave down there," he mused. "I've a mind to go down and see."

He leaned as far down as he could and listened. He heard nothing.

"Well, I'm going down to see what's there, at any rate. It won't take me more than a minute or two."

Having come to this resolution he crawled inside the tree, felt for the upper rung of the rope ladder, and then began to descend into pitchy darkness. The place seemed to widen out around him, but he could see nothing. At last he touched the solid ground. Turning around he was about to strike a match when he saw a faint gleam of light twenty feet away. That indicated that there was somebody there, and Ted stopped and put his hand on the butt of his revolver. As an intruder he was liable to be up against trouble, and he wanted to be prepared to meet it. It struck him that it would be more prudent for him to return to the surface and summon Jesse to back him up. He began to entertain a strong suspicion that Tess Cooke might be a prisoner in this place. In no other way could he account for her mysterious disappearance. While he stood undecided as to what he should do he heard the gruff tones of a man's voice where the light was. The place appeared to be divided in two parts, the man and the light being in the further one. Ted decided to risk striking a match. He did it on his trousers

leg, and he caught a brief survey of the underground room before him, and the outline of the bulkhead beyond.

He located the long table, the benches and other impedimenta before the match went out, and had satisfied himself that there was no one that side of the bulkhead. As Ted listened he heard another voice reply to the gruff one. It sounded as if it might be a girl's. The very suspicion that it was thrilled the boy. He determined to make sure. With great caution he made his way to the opening into the section beyond the bulkhead, holding his revolver in his hand. Before he reached it he had heard and recognized Tess's voice. The man's voice also had a familiar ring. It hardly needed a sight of the fellow's villainous features to satisfy him that it was Tug Ralston who was threatening Tess, like the coward he was. It made Ted's blood boil to think that the girl of his heart was at the mercy of such a scoundrel. But it shouldn't be for many moments more if he could help it. Glancing through the doorway he saw Tess lying with her hands bound behind her upon one of the beds. She regarded her captor and tormentor with her customary fearlessness. As far as the wordy contest went Ralston was getting decidedly the worst of it.

He seemed to be partially under the influence of liquor.

"Well, I've got you, at any rate, and what's more I'm goin' to keep you here till I've shot that young fool, Ted Brown. Then I'll light out and you can go back to your old man," Ralston was saying.

"If you should shoot Ted Brown you'd better order your own coffin at the same time," retorted Tess, in a tense tone. "I'd follow you to the end of the earth if I had to, and I'd shoot you down like a dog at the first chance I got."

"Yah! You little spitfire!" snarled the rascal. "I believe you would do it, but I'll take good care that you never find out where I've gone."

"I'll find you if it took me years to do it, and when I did I'd put so many holes into you that you'd look more like a sieve than a human being."

"You talk to hear yourself, gal," sneered Ralston. "They say no man has ever dared to kiss you because you're so handy with your gun. Well, I reckon I'm goin' to kiss you now, with or without your consent."

"If you do you'll regret it, as sure as my name is Tess Cooke," replied the girl fiercely, her eyes flashing fire.

"I'll take my chances on that," he chuckled with a tipsy leer. "And what's more, I'm goin' to kiss you every day while you're here, d'ye understand? He advanced on the girl with an unsteady step, and leaning over seized her helpless form in his arms. She struggled as best she could to evade the pollution of his rum soaked and tobacco-sodden lips; but even had her arms been free her strength would have availed her nothing against his.

She felt his reeking breath on her face, and uttered a cry like a wounded animal, when—smash! The butt of Ted's revolver descended on the rascal's head, and he dropped like a steer stricken in the shambles.

CHAPTER X.—The First Kiss

"Tess!" cried Ted, pushing the insensible scoundrel aside with his foot. "It is I—Ted, come to save you!" He raised her in his arms, and as her eyes met his in the gloom even of the place, she knew him, and uttered a thrilling cry of delight.

"Ted, Ted!" she exclaimed, and dropped her head on his shoulder. He thrust his revolver back into his hip pocket, and set to work to unloosen the knot of the handkerchief that held her wrists together.

"Yes, it's me, all right, and Jesse is outside, too," he said as he worked away.

"Oh, Ted, I'm so glad you've come to save me from that brute. Had he succeeded in kissing me I believe I should have killed him the moment I got a weapon of any kind in my hands."

"Never mind, Tess. Calm down. He didn't kiss you. I'm afraid I should have shot him myself if he had done so. As it is, if I haven't broken his skull it's because it's an uncommonly thick one." As soon as her arms were free she threw them impulsively around Ted's neck and looked lovingly into his face. Then before he knew what was coming she kissed him on the lips.

"There, I've done what I never did before in my life to anyone but my father and mother," she said with a rich flush on her face; "but I couldn't help it. I love you, Ted, and I don't care who knows it."

"And I love you, too, Tess, with all my heart." As he uttered the words he kissed her as she had kissed him, and she smiled contentedly.

"And now let us get away from this place," he said, releasing her. "But first we must secure this rascal so he will not be able to escape until the sheriff comes after him." Ted tore one of the blankets in strips and bound the fellow's arms behind his back, both at the elbows and at the wrists. Then he tied his legs together.

While he was doing the latter Tess spied the butt of her revolver sticking from Ralston's hip pocket, and she immediately secured it. Leaving the ruffian where he was, to recover his senses without aid, the boy took up the candle, stuck it in the neck of a bottle, and, with Tess by his side, walked into the other section of the underground cavern. He placed the bottle on the table.

"This is a wonderfully secure retreat, Tess," he said, leading her toward the rope ladder. "The only entrance seems to be through a great hollow tree above, the opening to which is hidden by the bushes. It was made by human hands you can easily see, and it must have taken a bunch of men to do it. Has Ralston any companions to your knowledge?"

"I have neither seen nor heard anyone besides him since I was brought here yesterday afternoon," she answered.

"Then he may have accidentally found this place and was occupying it alone until he captured you. You shall tell me by and by how he managed to get you in his power, Tess."

"I can tell you now in a very few words," she replied. "While passing through this wood

on my return from a visit to the Golding farm yesterday afternoon my mare was startled by the sudden appearance of a strange dog, and threw me. While I was suffering from the shock Tug Ralston came upon me, took my revolver away and then, after binding me with his handkerchief, and tying my own across my mouth, he carried me down into this underground cavern and laid me on one of those straw beds to recover. That's the whole story of how I came to be in his power."

"Well, Tess, here is the rope ladder. Will you go up first? Don't mind the darkness. You will find the opening in the tree before you. Step right out into the bushes, and I'll be with you in a moment." While he placed his foot on the ladder to steady it she climbed up. In a few moments he heard her call down "All right!" Then he followed and found her standing just outside the opening. Pushing their way through the bushes they reached the bridle-path.

"Jesse! Oh, Jesse!" shouted Ted.

"Hilloa!" came back from his chum at some distance.

"Tell me, Ted," said Tess, grasping the boy's arm lovingly with both of hers, "how did you find that cavern, and how did you know I was down there?"

"I found it by accident, and I did not know you were down there. It was this that caused me to hunt around here for some evidence of your presence," and he took from his pocket the locket he found in the grass, and handed it to her.

"My locket!" she cried. "I had not missed it." She opened it and kissed his picture.

"I'd rather you'd kiss me than my picture," he said.

"Would you?" she asked with a coquettish glance. Then she threw her arms around his neck and once more their lips met. And it was a long kiss, too, for Jesse hove in sight as they separated.

"Hurrah!" shouted Dane when he caught sight of Tess. "You've got her, have you?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" replied Ted.

"Where in creation have you been, Tess?"

"You'd never guess," replied Ted. "She's been a prisoner in an underground cavern."

"A prisoner in an underground cavern!"

"Exactly. And who do you suppose was keeping her there?"

"How should I know?"

"Then I'll tell you. It was Tug Ralston."

"You don't mean it!" almost gasped Jesse. "Do you mean to say that Ralston is in this neighborhood?"

"I do. I knocked him out with the butt end of my revolver a few minutes ago."

"Well, I don't see how he managed to keep clear of the sheriff."

"You would if you'd seen the snug hiding-place he's got."

"Where is it?"

"Do you see that big, thick oak tree yonder?"

Jesse nodded.

"The trunk is hollow."

"The dickens it is!"

"The roots are also hollow. In fact, a deep hole leads right down to a cavern under the ground. The sheriff evidently doesn't know of the exist-

ence of the place. It is furnished with a good-sized table, benches, and a dozen straw couches covered with blankets. It looks like the roosting place of a gang of bandits."

"There are no bandits in this neighborhood."

"No; but I heard there was some years ago when the Lookout mine first started."

"You say you knocked Ralston out?"

"I did."

"And he's down in that cavern?"

"Yes—securely bound hand and foot, waiting for the sheriff to take charge of him."

"I'm glad that I see his finish in sight. He's wicked enough to get a life sentence."

"If he gets five years I think it will be the most that'll happen to him," replied Ted.

While they were talking the party had started to walk back to the Cooke home, Tess holding on to Ted as if she considered him her private property. Soon after striking the creek road they saw a small party of horsemen approaching them at a brisk trot. It consisted of old man Cooke and his friends starting out for a more extended search of the country. The prospector was riding a bit in advance and he immediately spotted his daughter and the boys. With a shot he spurred on his animal, and alighting close to the young people he grabbed his child in his arms with tears of joy and relief running down his bronzed cheeks.

"Tess, Tess, where have you been since yesterday. What happened to you?" he asked after pressing her to his breast and kissing her several times.

"Dear old dad; did you miss me so much?" she replied with a fond caress.

"Tell me where you have been," he repeated tremulously.

"I've been a prisoner in an underground cave."

"A prisoner in an underground cave!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, and I'd have been there yet, and probably for some time, only for Ted Brown. He found me and rescued me from the rascal who had captured me."

"Who is the rascal who treated you this way, and where is he? If we catch him we'll hang him to the nearest tree."

"No, you mustn't hang him, dad, though he deserves it. You must turn him over to the sheriff. He's been looking for him for a week. It's Tug Ralston."

"Tug Ralston!" gritted the old man. "He shall suffer for this outrage. Where is he?"

"Ted will show you. He made a prisoner of him. You must thank Ted, dad, for saving me."

The old prospector grabbed Ted by the hands and thanked him with gratitude in his heart.

"Now," he said, "lead us to where this scoundrel is. We'll settle with him in mighty short order," added the old man grimly.

"I will on condition that you promise not to make it a hanging bee," replied Ted. "I can't be a party to turning that fellow off in such a way, bad as he is. You must agree to turn him over to the sheriff."

The prospector didn't want to agree to any such thing. In his younger days he had been used to lynch law for offences far less serious in his opinion than this attack on his daughter. The very idea of that rascal depriving his daughter of her liberty even for an hour was beyond pardon in his estimation. The other men, more cool-headed

and less interested, back Ted up. They declared that as long as Tug Ralston had not actually harmed Tess Cooke they could not go to extremes with him. With everybody opposed to his summary plan the prospector reluctantly agreed to hand Ralston over to the authorities. He took Ted up behind him on his horse, and while Tess and Jesse walked on to her home the mounted party, guided by Ted, proceeded to the hollow tree in the wood.

CHAPTER XI.—Ted Starts for Home.

Less than an hour later the mounted party rode up to the Cooke home. They had Tug Ralston, who had regained his senses, strapped on the back of one of the horses. He looked like the hard case he was—dirty, unshaven and sullen. Ted dismounted and rejoined Tess, while the rest of the party, after finishing the contents of the old man's whisky jug, started for Carson with their prisoner. The young people entertained one another until Pop Cooke returned. Ted and Jesse helped the girl prepare dinner, which was all ready by the time the prospector got back with a glow of satisfaction on his rugged countenance. During the meal Tess told her story to her father, and then Ted told him how he had discovered the entrance to the secret retreat underground.

"It's a lot of satisfaction to me to know that the rascal is under lock and key at last, with the pretty certain prospect of spending a good many moons in the State prison," said Ted.

"I'm so glad," said Tess. "I was always afraid that he would harm you, Ted."

"And I'm glad, too," put in Jesse. "I was always nervous about Ted myself."

Late that night, after the boys had gone home, the sheriff and his posse drew up before the Cooke home and the officer rapped on the door. The prospector was aroused and looked out of the window.

"Hello, John," he said. "I've got Tess back."

"Glad to hear it," answered the sheriff. "Where is she?"

The old man told him all the particulars, winding up with the statement that he'd find Tug Ralston safe in the calaboose at Carson.

"That's good," replied the officer. "That young chap did you and Tess a good turn, and me one as well. He deserves the thanks of the county."

The posse rode away and the prospector went back to bed. Next morning Ralston was brought before the Carson magistrate for examination. Tess and Ted were on hand to give their evidence. Ralston had nothing to advance in his own defense, so he was held for trial at the county seat. The sheriff lost no time in taking him to the county jail, where he was provided with a cell till his day of trial. Before that event came off old man Cook had thoroughly prospected Ted's property and told him that the facts warranted his proceeding at once with the formation of a company to take over the ground and begin mining operations on an up-to-date principle. So Ted decided to start for home to have a talk with his mother and set the ball rolling. The nearest town on the railroad to Carson was Truxton, fifty miles distant, and Ted had to go there on horseback to catch a train East. Tess hated to part with him, even

for a few weeks, but she realized that she had to do it.

"You won't forget me, will you, Ted?" she said tearfully the night before he was to begin his journey. "You won't let any other girl come between us? Promise me."

"Of course I'll promise you," he said, kissing her. "Just as if any other girl stood the ghost of a show alongside of you."

"I should want to die if anything happened to take you away from me," she said.

"Oh, nothing is going to happen to do that," he answered. "You're the only girl I ever had, anyway."

"Am I?"

"Yes, you are."

"I'm so glad of that. I think I'd shoot any girl that tried to come between us. I'd shoot her and then kill myself."

"Don't talk nonsense, Tess. Are you going to be jealous of every girl that looks at me?"

"No-o; but I want you all myself."

"Well, you've got me all yourself."

"Not when you're away from me—hundreds of miles away."

"Can't you trust me?"

"Yes, of course; but——"

"But what?"

"I'm not like other girls. I've seen pictures of them in the magazines that dad takes. They dress in fine clothes, and they look prettier than me."

"Don't you believe that they're prettier than you. I think you're the loveliest girl in all the world."

"Do you honestly believe that, Ted?" she asked, nestling closer to him.

"Bet your life I do. Just wait till I'm president of my copper mining company, and we're married one of these days, I'll get you clothes that will make your head swim. Your father says that I'm bound to make a million or more out of the mine in time. A million is a whole lot of money. The interest on it alone would give a man a good income. Well, that million will be as much yours as mine. If I belong to you my money will, too."

"I don't care anything about your money. I'm satisfied to have you."

"Even if I was only a boy copper miner?" laughed Ted.

"Yes. I wouldn't care what you were."

"You'll think different one of these days. Wait till you come to live in a fine house, and dress like a lady, then you'll understand the value of money."

"Maybe so; but I wouldn't lose you for all the money and dresses in the world."

"I'm glad to hear it. By holding on to me you'll get the money and dresses, too, and the fine house, and servants to boss around."

"Oh, dear, I don't know what I should do with servants. I've always kept house for dad myself."

"Well, don't worry about the servant problem till you're up against it. I'm going to write you two or three times a week, and you must answer at least half my letters."

"I'll answer them all."

"So much the better. I'll be on the lookout for them."

Ted promised to ride out in the morning to bid her a final good-by, and then he took his leave.

Jesse got leave of absence from the mine to see his chum off on his road East. Ted met him at

the mine after his last parting from Tess and they rode together as far as the town of Dunkirk, nine miles from Carson. There the boys shook hands and separated, and Ted continued on his way alone. His course took him through the mountains, but the road was a good one all the way to Truxton, and was the route taken by the teams carting the copper ore to the railroad. Ted calculated on reaching Sedgwick, a small town, about dark. He intended to stop there for the night. His animal, however, stepped into a hole and wrenched his foot, and the boy had to lead him a mile till he came to a brook, where he bathed the limb and gave him a rest. The horse, however, limped a good bit after that, so that Ted had to favor him all he could lest he break down altogether. The consequence was that darkness caught him many miles west of Sedgwick. Furthermore, the sky had grown overcast and every moment looked more threatening.

"This is kind of hard luck," he said to himself. "Looks as if I'm in for a wetting. I don't know how far Sedgwick is from here, but I judge that it's quite a distance. It's liable to take me three or four hours to reach it at this rate. If I saw a house anywhere in sight I'd apply for supper and a night's lodging for myself and beast. A good night's rest ought to bring the animal around all right. But this seems to be a particularly lonesome stretch. Not a solitary light in sight. Oh, I'm wrong. There's a light now, but it must be a good half a mile away, and a bit off the road. I'll have to make for it. I hope it's from a farmhouse, though I haven't seen the sign of a farm for the last three hours. It's too mountainous about here I guess for a farm to be productive."

Ted pushed on, keeping the light in sight. He was not riding, but leading the horse, as the animal went better that way. The light continued to shine clear and distinct through the night, and Ted found no difficulty in keeping it in view. That it came from some house, whose outlines the boy was not yet able to make out, was almost certain, and Ted welcomed any old shelter with pleasure, for the rain had begun falling in a kind of drizzle which promised to become heavier presently, while the wind was rising and souging through the many trees in the vicinity. At length Ted came to a half opened gate leading into a short lane. He took the liberty of entering it with his horse. The fencing and general aspect of the place, as well as he could make out in the dark, did not impress him with the worldly importance of the person or persons who lived there.

"I don't believe I'll find much of an accommodation here," he mused; "but any kind of a roof is better than no shelter at all on such a night as this. It's going to rain pretty hard before a great while, and if I were obliged to push on to Sedgwick I should resemble a drowned rat by the time I got there. Who would have thought when I left Carson this morning that I should run into such conditions as these? It looked then as if it wasn't going to rain for a month. However, that wouldn't have made any difference with me if my horse hadn't met with that accident. We should both be snugly housed in Sedgwick by this time. Well, a fellow must take things as they come in this world and say nothing."

The light vanished as Ted continued on up the lane, but a dark blot upon the gloomy landscape indicated the position of the house he had been

counting on. The lane ended at a tumble-down gate, and pushing this open on its rusty hinges, boy and horse found themselves in a yard overgrown with weeds and other kinds of rank vegetation. Had it been lighter Ted would have seen a weather-beaten two-story building that showed every evidence of neglect and comparative poverty. In the darkness and rain, however, most of its shortcomings were temporarily concealed from the young visitor, who was not curiously enough disposed to examine the house with a critical eye. Ted walked up to a door in a single-story addition at the rear, where he saw a light and which was evidently the kitchen, for a stovepipe rose through the roof, and knocked loudly.

CHAPTER XII.—A Startling Encounter

Ted had to knock a second time before any notice was taken of his presence. Then the light disappeared from the window, the door was unbarred and opened on a chain, and the outlines of a gaunt-looking woman of middle age, with a lamp in her hand, appeared in the narrow space.

"Who are you and what do you want?" she inquired in a tone that did not speak well for a hospitable reception.

"I am a boy, and I want shelter from the rain. I am on my way to Sedgwick."

"Why don't you go on to Sedgwick, then?"

"I'm afraid it's too far."

"It ain't more'n seven miles by the road."

"My horse has broken down, and it's raining harder every moment I'd rather stay here a while if you'll let me. If you'll give me a bed and something to eat, with shelter and some hay for my animal, I'll pay you well."

"What will you pay?" asked the woman, her eyes lighting up greedily at the word.

"I'll give you a dollar, if you think that's fair," replied Ted.

"A dollar!" exclaimed the woman.

"Yes, a dollar."

"I haven't any accommodations for strangers in the house," she answered, after a pause, during which she eyed the boy closely under the gleam of the lamp. "Besides, my husband wouldn't stand for you bein' here nohow. I expect him home any moment, maybe drunk, and he'd break my bones if he caught sight of you. Still, I want that dollar mighty bad. I don't see money very often, and a dollar would be a windfall to me. If you wouldn't mind puttin' up with the hay in the loft of the barn—you could put your horse in one of the vacant stalls—and some meat and bread with a jug of milk, and will pay me a dollar for it, you kin stop; but I can't do no better."

"All right," replied Ted, who was glad to make any kind of an arrangement that offered shelter from the inclemency of the weather. "The barn will do all right."

"It ain't much of a place," said the woman, in an apologetic tone, "but it'll keep off the wind and rain. You'll find plenty of hay for a bed in the loft, and you kin give your hoss as much of it as he kin eat. You'll find a bucket somewhere on the ground floor. You kin fill it with water from the trough in the yard. I'll let you have a lantern if you'll promise to be careful with it, and fetch it back as soon as you've fixed your hoss. Then you

kin give me the dollar, and I'll give you the food and the jug of milk."

Ted told her that was satisfactory, so she got the lantern, lit it and handed it to him.

"You'll find the barn yonder," she said, waving her hand in the direction.

"Thank you, ma'am, I'll find it."

He found the building easily enough, and it was truly a dilapidated structure. Ted wondered if it really would keep the rain out. The door was held shut by a leather strap attached to a button. The boy walked in first and looked around the ground floor. He saw two stalls, in one of which was a fodder rack. A rickety buggy stood at one side, held together by ropes, each of the wheels leaning in a different direction. Pieces of harness hung about, but there was no sign of a horse. Various farming implements, much the worse for use, lay around in disorder. Ted went up the flight of stairs he saw in the corner and examined the loft.

There was a pile of hay there that would make a soft enough bed; a covered oblong box, which might or might not have been empty, and various odds and ends connected with farming. Ted pitched as much hay down as he thought would satisfy the appetite of his animal, descended, put it in the rack, and then led the animal into the stall. The horse attacked the hay, and while he was thus employed Ted hunted up the bucket and filled it at the trough. After the animal had ate his fill the boy watered him, and then returned to the house with the lantern. The woman had the food waiting for him, and after handing her the dollar bill, which she clutched as though it were a yellowback, he took the plate of meat and buttered bread, and the jug of milk, and retired to the barn to make away with it. He shut the barn door, but could not fasten it on the inside. Carrying the jug and the plate up to the loft, he sat down on the floor in the dark and disposed of the meat and bread and milk with a good appetite. The rain, which had stopped after his conversation with the woman, now came down in earnest, while the wind piped up and whistled through the crannies of the barn.

"Gee! But I'm glad I'm under cover. It's a beastly night to be out in. The rain doesn't seem to come in through the roof, that's one satisfaction. As for the wind, I don't mind that, for the weather is warm. If it was winter I'd have to burrow under the hay to avoid being frozen. Well, I'll turn in now, hoping that there may be a change for the better by morning so that I can go on to Sedgwick."

Ted threw himself upon the pile of hay, and was presently lulled to repose by the wind and rain. A couple of hours passed, and then there was a noise outside. Two men were crossing the yard toward the barn. Both were of powerful physique, and hard-looking chaps. The one who led the way carried a lantern in his hand, and it was the lantern Ted had used to attend on his horse. The rain had stopped to some extent, but the flashing light showed that it was still coming down in a heavy drizzle. The men were pretty soaked, but neither seemed to mind it much. The man with the lantern opened the barn door and walked in, followed by his companion. As neither glanced in the direction of the stalls the horse escaped their attention.

"Look out that you don't stumble over that

there plow, Tug," said the man who appeared to be the owner of the barn.

"I'll look out, don't you fear," replied his companion, none other than Tug Ralston, who had escaped, with a couple of other prisoners, from the county jail early that morning. "You think this place will be safe for me to lie low in for a while?"

"It will be safe enough for to-night, I guess. In the mornin' I'll take you to a place in the woods where you'll be all right as long as you choose to stay there."

"I reckon I struck luck when I met you, Higgins," said Ralston as he followed the man up the stairs to the loft. "It must be nigh on to two years since we was pals."

"It's all of that, Tug, and I'm right glad to meet you again."

"You're doin' me a good turn, Higgins, and I sha'n't forget it."

"I never go back on an old friend if I can help it."

The two men were now in the loft and Higgins flashed his lantern carelessly around. The light revealed to him the outlines of the sleeping boy on the hay.

"What in thunder have we here?" he ejaculated with an imprecation.

He stepped quickly over to the spot and turned the lantern full upon Ted, who was sleeping with his head buried in the hay.

"A boy," he said. "I wonder if he came in here on his own hook or whether my missus gave him permission to sleep here?"

"Is she that soft-hearted?" asked Ralston with a sour look.

"Not to my knowledge she isn't. I'll have to rout him out or it won't be safe for you to stay here."

"If you rout him out he'll see me, anyway."

"Not if you hide yourself while I'm doin' it."

"Where will I hide?"

"Get into that corner."

Ralston did so. Then Higgins grabbed Ted by the arm and pulled him into a sitting posture.

"What are you doin' here, young feller?" he asked the boy in a fierce tone.

Ted looked at him in sleepy bewilderment.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I asked you what brought you here?" demanded Higgins crustily.

"Are you the man who owns this place?"

"Yes, I'm the man who owns this place. You ain't got no right here, so just skip."

"Won't you let me stay till morning?"

"No, I won't. I won't have you 'round here."

"I came here to get out of the rain, and I paid——"

Ted stopped as it suddenly occurred to him that the woman of the house might not want this man, who was probably her husband, to know that she had received a dollar for food and the poor accommodation of the loft.

"What's that? You paid what?"

"Nothing," replied the boy, who would rather lose the benefit of his money than get the woman in trouble. "I was bound for Sedgwick. My horse sprained one of his forelegs and couldn't carry me. Then it got dark and came on to rain. So I put in here to rest the horse and keep dry."

"Where's your hoss?"

"Downstairs in one of the stalls."

"I didn't see him. Well, you'd better take him

and go. You can reach Sedgwick in an hour or so."

"I'm afraid the horse won't bear me, so I'll have to walk."

"I don't care what you do as long as you get a move on."

"I'll give you half a dollar if you'll let me stay till morning."

"No, you won't give me nothin'. Just make yourself scarce, d'ye understnd?"

Ted realized that further argument was useless, and he got up from his straw bed. Higgins raised his lantern and flashed it in his face.

As the boy's features were plainly illuminated Tug Ralston uttered an exclamation of surprise and anger. Ted turned and looked in the direction of the sound. Ralston dashed forth from his place of concealment and grabbed the boy by the back of the neck.

"I've got you again, have I? Well, I reckon I'll fix you for keeps now, blast you!"

He drew a revolver from his pocket, cocked it and pressed it against Ted's head.

CHAPTER XIII.—How Higgins Saves Ted's Life and the Boy Returns the Favor.

"Hold on, Tug!" exclaimed Higgins. "What in thunder are you up to?"

He knocked up his companion's arm just as the rascal pulled the trigger. There was a flash, a stunning report that staggered Ted, and the bullet went into the roof of the barn.

"Are you mad, Tug Ralston?" roared Higgins, grabbing the revolver and wrenching it from his companion's hand. "What in creation did you try to shoot this boy for?"

"'Cause I hate him!" replied Ralston vindictively.

"You hate him!" cried Higgins in surprise.

"Yes, I hate him. Give me the gun so I can finish him."

"Do you mean to say that you know this boy?"

"Yes, I know him, and I'll never rest until he's planted."

"What have you got against him?"

"That's my business. I had him twice dead to rights, but each time he got away. He sha'n't get away now if I have to strangle him."

He spoke with compressed fury and made a grab for Ted. Higgins, however, interfered.

"Stop!" he said in a determined voice. "I won't stand for no murder business on my premises. Do you s'pose I want to have a noose put 'round my neck on your account?"

"Then leave the boy with me and get back to your house. You needn't know what happens after you're gone."

"I tell you I won't have nothin' like that happen 'round here," replied Higgins firmly, thrusting the revolver into his pocket.

"Well, if you don't like bloodshed I can wring his neck just as well as not. I don't care how I fix him as long as I do it," said Ralston sullenly.

"No, you let the boy alone."

"I thought you was a friend of mine," growled Tug.

"I'm doin' you a friendly turn in savin' you from the gallows."

"I ain't worryin' about the gallows."

"You'll get there pretty quick if you killed this boy."

"How do you know I would? I'm willin' to take the chances to get square with him."

"What the dickens has he done to you that you're so dead set against him?"

"He's done enough."

"It's my opinion that you're a bit off your block."

"I don't care what your opinion is. I'm goin' to settle things with this boy whether you like it or not."

"I say you're not. Skip along, young fellow, while you've got the chance."

Ted, seeing his opportunity, moved toward the ladder. With a howl of rage Tug started for him, but Higgins interposed his bulky form between. In a moment the two men grappled. Both were of about equal strength and physique, and they swayed to and fro about the loft. As Ted had no interest in their encounter, though he felt grateful to Higgins for saving his life, he rushed downstairs, unhitched his horse and led him out into the night. The rain had ceased, but there was no sign that the weather was clearing up. As Ted passed through the barn door he heard a crash up in the loft, and saw a flash of light through the small, sashless opening. He hastened to lead his limping animal away, and had got as far as the gate of the lane when, looking back, he saw the loft was on fire.

"Well, it's nothing to me," he muttered, leading his horse into the lane. "Still, I wouldn't like to see any harm come to that man who saved me from having my brains blown out. I'll wait here a few moments."

The words were hardly out of his mouth before he saw one of the men dash out through the door and run towards the woods.

"That must be Ralston. The man who owned the place would not run away like that."

He watched to see Higgins appear, but he didn't, and the fire was increasing fast.

"I shouldn't wonder if Ralston knocked him senseless and then left him behind to burn up. He's coward and cur enough to do just such a thing. I'm going back to help the man myself. I owe him a good turn, and will pay it if I can."

Ted, after hastily tying his horse to a big spreading tree, ran back to the barn, which was blazing away at a great rate. The smoke was pouring out of the window, which was outlined against the glare of the flames, and was rising through the interstices of the shingle roof. Very little was coming through the doorway, and through that entrance Ted rushed. It looked like a risky matter to venture up the ladder to the loft, but the boy, feeling that a life was at stake, was not deterred by the danger.

He bounded up two steps at a time and thrust his head into the thick smoke that filled the upper story. Almost within his reach lay the unconscious form of the owner of the place, stretched at full length. Ted stepped up and grabbed him by the head and shoulders. He was a heavy weight to move, especially under the circumstances. At that moment he heard the screams of the woman of the house, who had just discovered that the barn was on fire. Whether she had any knowledge that her husband had gone to the building with the stranger he had brought with him, or whether

she was merely concerned about the safety of the boy she had sent there to sleep, certain it is she ran toward the barn in great excitement. She reached the door just in time to see Ted dragging her insensible husband down the stairs as he might a bag of goods. With a shriek the woman rushed forward to help him. As she caught her husband in her sinewy arms the boy staggered against the plow and fell over it.

Then the floodgates of heaven opened of a sudden and a heavy downpour of rain descended upon the landscape. Under this deluge the fire began to hiss and splutter where it had broken through the roof. Through it all the woman bore her husband to the house, and unmindful of the boy who had really saved him, started to bring him to his senses. This was not a difficult job, and he was soon on his feet, looking out the door at the barn where the fire was making little headway in the pouring rain. The woman hurriedly told him how the boy, to whom she now admitted having given permission to stay all night in the loft, had pulled him downstairs from the burning loft, but she had not seen him since.

"He probably went off in the rain," she concluded.

"He needn't have done that now," growled the man. "As he did me a good turn I'd have let him stay in the kitchen for the rest of the night."

Seeing that while the rain continued there was a chance to save the lower part of his barn, at any rate, Higgins left the house and ran over to the building. As he picked up the bucket that Ted had used to water his horse he saw the boy getting up from the plow on which he had been lying, knocked out.

"Hey!" cried Higgins. "You here yet? Run to the house and ask the old woman to give you a tin pail. I want you to help me put out the fire."

Ted got the pail and he and Higgins worked vigorously for the next fifteen minutes carrying water from the trough up to the loft and throwing it upon the burning hay and smoldering wood. At the end of that time the flames had been entirely subdued. Now that the need of further exertion was over Higgins turned to Ted and said:

"My old woman says you saved my life when I was unconscious in the burnin' loft above. Well, I'm obliged to you. If I can ever do as much for you I'll do it."

"You've already done as much for me. You saved me from having my brains blown out by Tug."

"That's so. I forgot about it. In fact, you were the cause of the racket between us which ended by his laying me out as stiff as a poker. He's got a fist that has as much power in it as a mule's hind legs."

While they were talking the rain eased up again to a smart drizzle, but that made little difference to them, as they were as wet as though they had been in the nearby river.

"Where did you leave your hoss?" asked Higgins.

"Under a big tree in the lane."

"You'd better go and bring him back. You can stay in the house for the rest of the night. The old woman shall make you a shakedown in the kitchen, and build a good fire to dry your clothes and mine."

"I'm much obliged to you."

"You're welcome. By the way, what is this grudge that Tug has against you?"

Ted told him about the incident in the mine which had led to Ralston's animosity.

"So he's been workin' in the Lookout mine, has he? I never knew that before. Well, I don't think he was such a tough chap as he seems to be. He and me used to be pals once, about two years ago. Then he disappeared all of a sudden and I didn't see him again till to-night, when he came into the saloon at the Corners and asked for a drink. He seemed kind of nervous like, and when I went up and slapped him on the shoulder he jumped as though he had been shot, and put his hand to his hip pocket where he carried his gun. When he recognized me he called me outside and asked me to hide him up here, as he said he had broken jail that mornin'. I was willin' to do him a favor for old time's sake, so I fetched him on here. I was goin' to let him sleep in the loft, not supposin' it was occupied by somebody else. I would have let you stay only I wanted you out on his account. If he hadn't jumped on you the way he did there wouldn't have been all this trouble, and you'd have been on your way to Sedgwick."

Ted brought his horse back to the barn, gave him a rubbing down with the help of Higgins, and then accompanied the man to the house, where a bed was prepared for him on the kitchen floor, and his clothes with Higgins's were hung to dry before a roaring fire.

CHAPTER XIV.—A Fiendish Scheme of Ralston's

Next morning he was awakened by hearing the woman moving around the kitchen. She was preparing breakfast. When she saw that he was awake she pointed to his clothes, which were on a chair, and said she'd go out while he dressed himself. It didn't take Ted more than five minutes to get into his garments.

"There's a bucket of water, a towel and some soap outside," the woman said.

Ted accordingly went out into the yard and made his toilet as best he could. By that time breakfast was ready, and he was invited by Higgins to sit down and eat with them, which he was glad to do. When the meal was concluded he announced his intention of resuming his journey. He bade good-by to the man and his wife and started off, his horse seeming to have recovered from his lameness. He had covered perhaps one mile when a man jumped out from the cover of some bushes and confronted him. Ted had no difficulty in recognizing him as Tug Ralston. The fellow grabbed the bridle of his horse and then seized the boy by the arm.

"I s'pose you thought you wouldn't see me again," said Ralston grimly; "but I ain't so easily shook off. I'm sorry that I ain't got no weapon with me, but I reckon I can fix you without one."

Ted was unarmed, having left his revolver with Jesse. He had not the slightest idea of meeting Ralston when he left Carson, as he supposed the rascal was securely housed in the county jail. Therefore he was placed at a great disadvantage in the presence of the husky scoundrel. Ralston yanked him off his saddle, and held him while he bound his wrists behind his back.

"Now walk ahead of me or I'll smash your head in with a stone."

Ted, much against his inclination, felt obliged to comply with the fellow's orders.

"It's a wonder you wouldn't let up on a fellow after all the trouble you've given me," he said.

"I'll never let up on you till I've finished you," replied Ralston savagely.

Tug, leading the horse by the bridle, marched the boy ahead of him, up a path away from the road and into the mountains. The rascal had nothing to say, and Ted was in no mood for conversation. It was a fine sunshiny morning after the rain, and nature seemed to be in a chipper mood, as far as she could be in such a desolate region. Ted wondered where his enemy was taking him, but he knew that it was useless for him to question the man on the subject. After a walk that lasted perhaps an hour they came to a swift mountain stream. The banks were rocky and without verdure of any kind. Here Ralston stopped and tied the horse to a nearby tree.

"Sit down!" he roared at Ted.

The boy did so, for he judged the order would have been followed by a blow from the rascal's sledge-hammer fist had he refused to obey. Tug paid no further attention to him, but went nosing around among the boulders as if in search of something. Whatever it was the rascal was after, he did not find it, and he looked disappointed. Finally he took out his pipe, filled it with tobacco, lit it and began to smoke, regarding the boy with a malignant look.

"I s'pose you're achin' to know what I'm goin' to do with you," he said at length.

"I can imagine that it isn't anything good," replied Ted wearily.

"You'll find out by and by when the sun gets a bit hotter," snarled Ralston with an expression of sinister satisfaction.

"Look here, Ralston, can't I buy you off for a good sum of money?" asked the boy after a pause. "I'll also agree not to appear against you in court."

"I'll guarantee you won't appear against me in court, if I ever get there, whether it suits you or not," he replied significantly. "As to buyin' me off, you ain't got money enough to do that."

"I'll have plenty of money in a short time if you let me go."

"Where are you goin' to get it?"

"Out of the copper mine on my property."

"On your property?" sneered Ralston.

"Yes. That is my property where you ran across Jesse Dane and me that Sunday you first tried to shoot me."

"Your property, eh? Did you think you can stuff me with such a story as that?"

"I'm telling you the truth," replied Ted, earnestly.

"If that's your property, and there's a copper mine on it, why were you workin' like a nigger with the rest of us in the Lookout? Answer me that."

"I didn't know that there was copper on my land till recently. I worked in the Lookout mine to get a general knowledge of copper so that I could prospect my property and see if there was copper on it."

"That was the reason, eh?" said Ralston incredulously.

"Yes."

"And you expect me to believe that tommyrot?" jeered the rascal.

"I haven't any reason for telling you what isn't so."

"Yes, you have. You want to try and hoodwink me into lettin' you off. But it won't work, not for a red cent," said the ruffian sardonically.

"That isn't so. I want to convince you that I'm worth a lot of money, and that I'm able to pay you a good price for lettin' up on me."

"How much do you want to pay me?"

"I'll give you the first \$10,000 I'll get hold of."

"If I knew you had the money in good coin or notes at this moment I might talk business, but as you haven't I'm not goin' to take any chances."

"You won't be taking any chances. I'll give you my word that I'll pay you inside of six months."

"Your word ain't worth nothin' to me. You'd swear to any lie in order to give me the slip."

"If you take my life it won't benefit you the least bit," persisted Ted in desperate earnestness; "but you could get a whole lot of satisfaction from \$10,000."

"I know I could if I had it; but as I haven't I'll take a whole lot of satisfaction out of doin' you up."

"And you want to kill me just because I gave you one smack in the eye down in the mine that evening."

"I don't allow nobody to get the best of me if I can help it. It wasn't the blow you gave me alone. You made me tumble out of the cage, and I came within an ace of passin' in my checks."

"That was your own fault."

"That's a lie! It was yours," replied Ralston savagely.

"Well, even if it was, you wasn't hurt much. You were around Carson drinking that night."

"That's because I was lucky. I swore then I'd have your life, and I'm goin' to have it, so you might as well close your trap. All you can say won't alter my intentions a bit."

Ted looked at his relentless face and felt discouraged. The rascal had brought him there to kill him and could not be turned from his purpose. Just why he was delaying the commission of his crime Ted could not understand, but he wasn't kept long in ignorance. Ralston could have knocked his brains out with a stone and pitched his body in the stream, but he made no such attempt. He had hit on a more malignant mode of accomplishing his object—a mode that could have occurred only to such a hardened ruffian.

Ralston cut off part of the hitching-rope attached to the horse. With this he now proceeded to bind Ted's ankles together. Then he pushed the boy back on the flat stone just above the water on which he had been seated.

"Lie there," he said with an evil grin. "You'll have company presently. Then you'll understand how you've got to die. I sha'n't have to spill your blood this time. In fact, there won't be no blood lettin' at all. The inhabitants of these rocks will take the job off my hands."

"What do you mean?" asked Ted, not understanding what was in store for him.

"What do I mean?" replied Ralston with a fiendish grin. "I mean that I can count five rattlers comin' out of their holes at this moment. They've been waitin' for the sun to warm things up, and now they're comin' out to look around.

They're not very lively yet, but I mean to stir them up. When they get their mad up and look around to see who's the cause of it they'll see you. Then the moment they get within strikin' distance of you they'll wait for you to make the first move, and when you do there'll be somethin' doin' quicker'n a flash of lightnin'. A rattler can strike so quick it would make your head swim to follow the movement. The moment the p'ison is in you it'll work through your veins so fast that a whole drug-store couldn't save you if it was standin' yonder. How do you like the prospect?"

CHAPTER XV.—In Which Ralston Gets It in the Neck.

As Tug Ralston spoke he gathered up a handful of small stones and began casting them at the slowly moving reptiles. The rattlesnakes, the most deadly species of the wilderness, began to take notice. Whir-r-r! The warning rattle of one of the snakes sounded sharp and distinct above the swishing waters of the stream. The rascal threw more stones at him. Whir-r-r! Whir-r-r! The rattlers were throwing off their torpidity. They began coiling up ready to dart their heads, or even their entire sinuous folds, at the enemy they scented somewhere about. Tug laughed discordantly as he noticed the effect he had produced among them.

"They will soon have you, Ted Brown," he gritted. "Lie still there! Don't you dare get up or I'll make a target of your head, too."

Whir-r-r! One of the snakes sprung his rattle seemingly so close to Ted that the lad, with a cry of fear, turned over to roll as far away as possible. The snake was not quite within striking distance of the spot where the boy lay, but it saw him move and rapidly uncoiled to glide nearer.

"Stop!" roared Ralston, springing forward, for he saw that another move would precipitate Ted into the stream and rob him of the special entertainment he had counted on. As the boy made the move in his terror of the rattlesnake, Tug reached for and grabbed the edge of the rock nearest the snake. In a moment the snake stopped, coiled itself and arched its glittering head. Its keen, beady eyes were centered on Ralston's hand.

"You thought to escape the snakes, did you?" gritted the man. "Rather drown, eh? Well, I don't blame you, but I was too quick for you that time. Come back here and take your medicine. I wouldn't miss seein' you squirm among them snakes for a mint. What a circus it will—"

The sentence ended in a hoarse cry. Just as he pulled Ted back on the stone he raised his fingers from the rock. That movement was what the rattler had been waiting for. With the quickness of light its head shot forward and its fangs were buried deep in Ralston's hand. The man let go of Ted and turned around with a cry on his lips. He saw the rattler and realized that he had fallen into the pit he had dug for the boy. His face went ashen white with terror and despair. Another rattler was close upon him, too. While he was engaged with Ted they had singled him out as their enemy and came toward him. The whir-r-r sounded and the fangs of the second snake were buried in the fleshy part of his thigh.

His unearthly scream startled Ted into a sitting posture. The exertion of the act loosened the cord that bound his wrists so much that one of his hands came out and both were then free. The noise of the rattlers caused Ted to get his jack-knife out of his pocket in a twinkling and cut the rope that bound his ankles. Then he sprang on the rock and looked around to see how he could best evade the snakes. Their attention was all turned on Ralston, who had fallen and lay writhing on the ground. Ted gazed in a fascinated way at the doomed rascal. He saw two snakes strike him simultaneously—one in the cheek and the other in the neck. One minute later the scoundrel stiffened out and lay still, quite dead, his heart paralyzed by the quantity of deadly poison that had been injected into his veins. He had met the very fate he had designed for his victim, and the horror of it was such that Ted never forgot that scene as long as he lived.

As soon as the boy recovered his faculties he made haste to leave the vicinity. The man who had made so many attempts to kill him was now a corpse—a corpse that even the mountain vultures and coyotes would shun. In an hour his body would be black and bloated—an object of repulsion. The old adage that the mills of the gods grind slowly but exceedingly fine was demonstrated in his fate. He had been allowed to go his limit and had compassed his own death. Ted untied his horse from the tree and started back, near as he could guess, for the road leading to Sedgwick. It took him two hours to reach it, and another hour to cover the distance to the town. As soon as he got there he inquired for the deputy sheriff. He learned that he was away with a small posse trying to round Tug Ralston up. Then the boy told the constable how Ralston had met his death.

The news was immediately telegraphed to Truxton, the county-seat. Ted registered at a hotel for dinner, and after the meal started for Truxton at a smart gait. He arrived there too late to connect with the afternoon train, so he put up at the nearest hotel to the railroad station, and put in his time that evening writing a long letter to Tess Cooke, in which he detailed all his thrilling experiences since leaving Carson. He wound up by describing Ralston's terrible death and his own wonderful escape from a like fate. He also wrote a letter to Jesse describing what he had passed through, but in a much briefer way, referring him to Tess for the fuller details.

Next morning he took the eastbound train, and in due time arrived at Petersville and was welcomed with open arms by his happy mother. She hardly knew him, she declared on greeting him at the station, for he had changed quite a bit from the country lad who had gone West merely to look up his property. He was bigger and stronger and more manly looking. The hard work of the mine and the perils through which he had passed in connection with Tug Ralston had left their impress on him in more ways than one. He had a long talk with his mother about the land and the copper it contained, specimens of which he had brought with him. At her suggestion they both called on Judge Harper, a retired lawyer living in the village, who was a sort of friend of the family, and Ted laid the project of forming a company to mine the company before him. Ted

showed him the specimens, and the written report of old man Cooke. The evidence produced by the boy was sufficient to cause him to take a lively interest in the matter. He communicated with an expert mining man in Truxton, requesting him to go to the Brown property, and to call on Mr. Cooke for full details.

The result was a report so perfectly satisfactory that Judge Harper no longer had any doubts as to the advisability of helping Ted form a company for getting the ore on the market. Full particulars were obtained from the expert as to the cost of establishing and operating a suitable plant, the cost and method of shipping the ore. With complete data at this command the judge went ahead and interested capitalists in the scheme, and in due time the Montana Copper Mining Company was incorporated under the laws of the State of Montana, with the chief office at Truxton. The Brown property was turned over to the company, and Ted was elected president.

Old man Cooke was given some shares and made resident manager of the mine, a post he was thoroughly competent to fill. A working capital was raised, machinery purchased, buildings erected, and operations on the mine begun. Judge Harper, who had taken a big block of the stock, was made vice-president, but it was understood that for the present he was to attend to all the duties of the president, which his business experience qualified him for, while Ted went to the site of the mine and acted as assistant to Tess's father in order to thoroughly inform himself about all the details of copper mining. Jesse resigned his job with the Lookout Company and got a much better position under Ted, together with a considerable amount of the stock of the new company. Tess was thoroughly happy once more because Ted was back where she could see him several times a week.

The death of Tug Ralston had been a big relief to her, for the rascal's persistency in following up Ted had kept her continually on the anxious seat. Thus several months passed away and the Montana Mining Company began to attract attention in the commercial world as a promising producer of an ore that was much needed in electrical and other industries.

CHAPTER XVI.—In Which Tess Cooke Shows the Stuff She's Made Of.

"Say, Ted," said Jesse one morning, walking into the office of the Montana mine in one of the buildings on the property, "matters have come to a focus at last at the Lookout."

"What do you mean?" asked the young president of the Montana Company.

"There's a strike on at the Lookout."

"A strike!" ejaculated Ted.

"Yes. For higher wages and shorter hours. You know this thing has been on the hooks for some time."

"I know it has; but I didn't think it would come to a head so soon."

"Well, it has. The Lookout is tied up completely."

That wasn't pleasant news for Ted to hear. The same hours and the same pay were in force at his mine, and the dissatisfaction of the miners at

the Lookout was liable to spread to the Montana. This state of things was not entirely unexpected. The miners in the district had been pulling wires for shorter hours and increased pay for some time. They had held meetings on the subject, where speeches arguing in favor of better conditions from the men's standpoint had been made, and the majority of the miners were clearly in favor of bringing the matter to an issue. Committees had waited on the superintendents of both mines requesting that the change the men wanted be made. The mining companies were not in favor of granting the demands of their workers, and through their superintendents had given them to understand that fact. Their ultimatum was sullenly received by the men, who proceeded to hold more meetings in order to decide what they should do about it. A secret meeting had been held by the committee working in the men's interests on the preceding Sunday. What had transpired at that meeting was not generally known. As a matter of fact a last appeal to the mine owners had been decided on, failure of which was to culminate in a strike at both mines. The committee first waited on the superintendent of the Lookout. The spokesman delivered the men's ultimatum, giving the official forty-eight hours to communicate with the officers of the company at Truxton. Then the committee called at the Montana mine. Ted met the delegation. The spokesman asked for old man Cooke and was told that the superintendent had gone to Truxton and would not be back for three days. Instead of laying their ultimatum before Ted, the committee retired. The young president, being a boy, was not recognized by the committee as of sufficient importance to confer with. The men decided to wait till Cooke returned.

On the morning with which this chapter opens the forty-eight hours allowed the Lookout people expired, and the committee called on the superintendent of the mine for their answer. The superintendent told the men that the president of the company being away at New York, nothing could be done until he returned. The answer was not considered satisfactory. The order was immediately given to strike, and every worker in the mine quit at once. Jesse Dane was talking to the Lookout's superintendent when this happened, and he hastened back to tell Ted.

"Then we may look for trouble here," said the young president.

"I'm afraid so. You said nothing to me about getting an ultimatum from that committee that was here Monday noon."

"They didn't give me any ultimatum or anything else. They asked to see Mr. Cooke, and when I told them he was away at Truxton and would not be back until to-day or to-morrow, they said they would call again."

"Oh, I guess there'll be no strike here until the committee submits its ultimatum. There's little doubt but they'll do it, for we stand on the same footing with the Lookout people. It's a wonder that the committee didn't make their demand to you, for you're the president of the company, and the men know it."

"They said nothing to me one way or the other, though I asked the spokesman what business had brought the committee to the mine."

"You expect Mr. Cooke back to-day, don't you?"

This afternoon or to-morrow morning."

"What are you going to do if the men threaten to strike unless their demands are complied with?"

"I'm in favor of a compromise. At this stage of the game we can't afford to grant everything the men want. It would hurt the company."

"A strike would hurt it, too, wouldn't it?"

"Yes; but of the two evils I'd rather stand the strike than surrender unconditionally. As soon as this company is well on its feet I shall advocate dividing our prosperity with our workers; but we can't do that at present. It is unreasonable for the men to expect as much from us as from the Lookout, which has been established for some years, and is making money."

"If the Lookout mine yielded to all demands we would have to do the same, whether we could afford it or not, or shut down indefinitely."

"That's true; but from what I know of the president and officers of the Lookout there is little danger of such a thing happening."

At that moment Tess Cooke appeared in the doorway.

"May I come in?" she asked smilingly.

"Sure thing. Why not?" asked Ted.

As soon as the girl entered the office Jesse said he had some business outside to attend to. Fifteen minutes later he came rushing back in a state of great excitement.

"Ted," he cried, "a committee of Lookout strikers is outside. They have been down in the mine and about a third of our men have been induced to quit work."

"That so?" replied Ted. "That isn't a square deal. I must look into this."

He walked outside, followed by Tess and Jesse. A crowd of demonstrative men was gathered near the mouth of the main shaft. More were coming up from below as fast as the cage could bring them.

"What's the meaning of this?" demanded Ted, walking up to the men.

"It means that we've quit until your company gives us what we want—more pay and less hours," replied a big chap in sulky defiance.

"You haven't submitted any final demand to that effect."

"Our committee was here on Monday, just the same."

"Your committee said nothing to me whatever."

"Oh, you're only a boy. You don't count," replied the fellow sneeringly.

"I guess you'll find that I count some," replied Ted resolutely. "I order you all to go back to work and then submit the matter to Mr. Cooke when he gets back from Truxton."

"You order us to go back to work!" answered the man wrathfully. "You've got a lot of nerve for a kid. Who do you think you're talkin' to?"

"I'm talking to you, for one."

"D'ye hear that, fellers?" roared the man. "Are ye goin' to put up with his sass?"

"No, no!" cried the others angrily, surrounding the boy. "Tumble him into the cage and send him down into the mine."

"We'll do better than that," shouted the ring-leader. "We'll give him a free ride to the river in this here car. Seize him, some of you. Hand me that rope yonder and we'll tie him in so that he can't get out."

In spite of his resistance Ted Brown was lifted

into the car and tied there. Then the angry copper miners proceeded to push the car away from the mouth of the shaft toward the incline leading to the river. This ride that the dissatisfied and turbulent crowd of mine workers were bent on treating Ted to was no funny thing at all. The steel ore car, in which the boy was speedily secured by the wrists to each end of the rope passed down under the center of the vehicle, ran on rails that reached from the mouth of the shaft down a long, though not very steep incline, to a small dock on the creek, or river, as some called it. When filled with ore two men guided it down by means of a small chain, and after its contents were dumped into the lighter at the wharf they hauled it back up the incline to be refilled. Several of these cars were continually passing up and down on the rails during working hours, but at present the output of ore from the mine had come to a stop, and the cars were idle. If this particular car was sent over the edge of the incline with Ted in it and allowed to cover the distance to the wharf of its own accord, it was bound to accumulate unusual speed, enough, in fact, to bounce the car clear over the lighter into the creek. In that case Ted, being unable to extricate himself from his bonds, would surely be drowned. Whether the men thought of that or not, certain it is that they made no attempt to prevent the tragedy that was almost certain to take place. Ted, however, was not destined to take that fatal ride. As the car emerged from the crowd with its living burden, Jesse Dane sprang forward to his chum's aid. And he laid his arm on the steel car to stay its progress he was seized by a couple of miners and hurled back several yards. Then, with shouts of satisfaction, mingled with jibes hurled at the helpless boy, the procession continued on. Ted, however, had another defender—one who was prepared to give her life if need be to save him, but not before she had made things exceedingly sultry for the crowd about the car. That defender was Tess Cooke. Bounding forward like a fawn she placed herself, drawn revolver in hand, right before the moving car.

"Stop!" she cried imperiously. "Stop that car or I'll shoot, and if I miss one of you out of six you can tie me in the car, too."

The men stopped and looked at her in some confusion. Everybody knew Tess Cooke, and they knew she held the lives of six men in her right hand. They knew that she meant business, too, for the flash of her eye and the ring of her voice carried conviction to the beholders.

"Drop that car!" she cried. "Drop it this moment, or I'll lay every man of you out as stiff as a ramrod as sure as the sun is shining this moment."

The men at the car released their hold on it and fell back. The ringleader, who was just behind, shouted furiously at them.

"Are you goin' to let a gal stop you?" he snarled.

"You push the car if you think it's safe to do it," growled one of the men in a sulky tone.

With an imprecation the leader started forward, put both hands on the car and was about to give it a powerful shove that would have sent it against the girl and thence over the brink on to the incline, when Tess fired.

The fellow uttered a terrible cry, put his hand

to his chest and swung half around. Then he dropped like a stone.

"Back, all of you!" cried Tess, darting up to the car, menacing the crowd with her smoking weapon. "Back, I say!"

The mob of miners stampeded in a moment. Jesse, knife in hand, sprang into the car and cut Ted loose.

"I hope you didn't kill Gleason, Tess," said Ted as he bent over the unconscious ringleader.

"No, I didn't shoot to kill, but to give those men a lesson."

"You gave it to them, all right," said Ted.

Gleason was dangerously, but not fatally, hurt, and he recovered in time, but he never saw Tess Cooke after that but he kept her at a distance.

Accompanied by Tess and Jesse, Ted tackled the miners and got them to listen to reason. The result was they returned to work again. When Mr. Cooke returned he held an interview with the strike committee, explained to them the condition of the new company and offered them reduced hours at the same wages, promising, with Ted's sanction, to increase the pay later on. The men accepted the compromise and all further trouble at the mine was averted. The strike went on at the Lookout, and a company of State militia was sent to protect the company's property. Eventually a compromise was agreed on similar to the one at the Montana mine. Two years later Ted married Tess Cooke, took up his residence in Truxton, and his duties as president of the company. The stock of the Montana Copper Company by that time had risen above par, and the boy, now a young man, was independently wealthy.

Thus, from an humble copper miner, Ted Brown had risen to riches.

Next week's issue will contain "TIPS OFF THE TAPE; OR, THE BOY WHO STARTLED WALL STREET."

SMALL BELL MADE HISTORY

A small bell rests in a safe at the headquarters of the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia.

The casual visitor might pass it by, were it on exhibit, with just "what a pretty little dinner bell." But could that bell ring out its own history, it would tell the story of the opening of the Centennial Exhibition, fifty years ago.

It would whisper as in secret, that on June 1 it will again be rung at the opening ceremonies of the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition and that it would be placed on exhibit throughout the six months of the celebration.

The bell is made of bronzed metal, with a base of four inches. It boasts of being three inches tall.

It is decorated just sufficiently to bespeak the good taste of the donor. In modest printing it declares, "This Bell opened the Centennial in 1876. Presented to Hiram Horter by Hon. Wm. S. Stokley—Mayor."

TRUE GRIT

or

An Engineer at Eighteen

By Gaston Garne

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XII.

How Joe Bunker and His Pals Propose to Kill Two Birds with One Stone.

"We've lost fifteen minutes here. You can take the siding at Rocky Gulch, and we'll wait there for the night express, if you feel any doubts about reaching Paradise on time. It won't do, you know, to hold up the express."

"I'll get to Paradise all right, sir."

"But this is only your second trip over this division, and you know what the road is. I can't afford to take any chances. A freight train is of no earthly importance along the line. We've simply got to keep out of the way of everything else. Now go ahead and do the best you can. I'll send a trainhand to fire for you."

"All right, sir; but as it's mostly down grade, I shan't have to use much steam."

Bob let off two whistles, put his hand on the throttle, and with a curious sensation of responsibility which he had never before experienced, let steam into the cylinders, and the train moved off down the road.

Everything went along smoothly until they reached the vicinity of the long tunnel, when the appearance of a red light some little distance ahead caused Bob to whistle down brakes, and the freight came to a stop close to the mouth of the tunnel.

"What's the trouble?" asked the young fireman, leaning out of the cab window.

"Dunno," replied the person who held the red light.

He was a young fellow, bundled up to the throat, with a comforter that partly hid his features. He kept well in among the shadows, with his face turned down the tunnel, as though expecting something in that direction.

"The block light here shows a clear track," continued Bob. "Who sent you?"

"Section boss," mumbled the muffled lad.

"Well, the conductor will be along in a moment; you can talk to him."

"What's wrong now, Bob?" said Brown a minute later.

"Red lantern," was the answer, "shown by that young fellow over there."

"Over where?" asked the conductor.

Bob looked at the entrance to the tunnel, but the lantern bearer had disappeared; the lantern, however, was burning red, and distinct on the ground, which was some evidence that the young fireman had not been dreaming.

"I don't see him now, but there's the light."

Brown walked over to it and looked around carefully, but he couldn't see any one.

"What explanation did he have to give, Bob?"

"Nothing; merely said the section boss sent him."

"Deuced queer," said Brown, tugging away at his long mustache, as was his custom when annoyed. "Hello!" he shouted down the tunnel. There was no response.

"Go ahead slowly, Bob. I don't understand this at all. The block light is all right."

Brown got into the cab, and Bob let on steam. The train got under way and the acting engineer held her down to four miles an hour.

The tunnel was about a mile long, but at the pace they were going it seemed to be endless.

"This will never do," said Brown, impatiently. "At any rate, we'll never be able to reach the Rocky Gulch siding even before the express. Let her out a little more, Bob."

Bob increased the speed to six miles.

Five minutes passed away and then Brown's patience gave out entirely.

"We're half way through now, I guess, and no sign of anything wrong. Some rascal of a tramp must have held us up. I'll bet he and his gang are stowed away on the axles of one of the cars, or maybe stretched out on the roof. I'll fix 'em when we get to the Gulch. Go ahead, Bob."

At that moment there was a crunching of coal in the tender, and a man jumped down into the cab. He was quickly followed by another.

"Hands up, you people, or we'll blow the roofs of your heads off before you can say Jack Robinson!"

Bob turned his head quickly, and one glance showed him the baleful features of Steve Gummitt and Bill Patterson.

"You didn't expect to see us again, did you?" said Patterson, with a sneer, after Gummitt, assisted by Joe Bunker, who had quickly followed the others, had secured Brown and the acting fireman.

"Now, young feller," chimed in Bunker, "keep her as she is till I give you orders to do different. You spiled our little program last night, you did, cuss you for a butter-in! How you managed it beats me, but you done it, all right. If you think Joe Bunker's goin' to knuckle to a little whipper-snapper like you, you're off your base. We're goin' to fix you this trip for good and sure."

He shook his revolver menacingly at the boy.

But Bob's pluck came to the fore, and he sent out on the night air the whistle for down brakes. The man laughed.

"We dumped the crew off way back, so your whistle don't amount to a row of shucks," said Bunker, with a malevolent grin. "You're altogether too smart for this hemisphere, you are. That's what that young feller, Chet King, said, and he took lessons from me so he could polish you off when the time came. Tried to butt in 'tween him and the Kent gal, eh? Well, you won't do it no more. We'll attend to you presently. You've given us a sight of trouble, but this is the last of it."

"I'm sorry for you, yonker," said Gummitt, with a grin, "but you don't know what you're up against when you monkey with Joe Bunker."

"That's right, he don't," put in Patterson. "I owe him one myself for gettin' away from the shanty in the quarry when we thought we had him dead to rights."

Rocky Gulch siding now came in sight, and Bob was ordered to whistle for the switch, and

the freight left the main track, took the siding and came to a stop.

Bob was immediately secured by Patterson, while Bunker and Gummitt went over to the block house, and the operator was told to call up Paradise and say that the freight would be held there for the express. The operator, who was unsuspicious, obeyed, and then was overpowered and carried outside into the bushes.

Gummitt and Bunker then returned to the engine, pulled the prisoners out on the ground, and, leaving the conductor and acting fireman where they lay, took Bob around front and bound him securely to the pilot of Thirty-three.

"Now you can guess what's goin' to happen," said Bunker, maliciously. "We're goin' to send you to meet the express, and a pretty smash-up I hope the pair of you'll make. You're startin' for Paradise, but you won't get higher than—Good-night to you," and the three bowed derisively to Bob.

Gummitt then got into the cab, pulled open the throttle just enough to start the train and jumped off.

CHAPTER XIII.

Paradise or Death!

It would be utterly impossible to describe the feelings of Bob Blake as No. 33 glided out from the siding at Rocky Gulch onto the main track, and gathering momentum on the down grade, pushed ahead by the long string of loaded freight cars, began her wild dash down the mountainside.

It must be understood that the Round Top Railroad was a single track line from Rushville to Vinol.

All trains making the run from Avalanche to Paradise, after getting under way, proceeded down the heavy grade as far as the foothills with the steam cut off from the locomotive cylinders, the speed being regulated by the car brakes.

The reader will, therefore, understand as well as Bob did that the heavy freight, even when preceded by an engine with scarcely any steam in her cylinders, would, under the circumstances, all brakes being off, soon attain a frightful rate of speed.

The Bunker crowd knew when the night express passed Paradise, and calculated that the runaway freight, if it held to the track, would crush into the former somewhere on the lower curves of the mountains.

Bob had never been in a position of greater peril, but, nevertheless, his nerve did not desert him as he saw the rails disappear faster and faster under the advancing pilot, to which he was bound like the fabled Ixion to his wheel.

A boy who had shown grit enough to crawl around the promontory in Long View Valley might well be depended on not to yield to despair at the present critical situation.

Naturally, the first move the young fireman made was to try and free himself from his bonds. He thoroughly understood the situation in which he was placed, and knew that he had but little time to accomplish the job, if he could do so at all.

Bunker and his gang had certainly adopted an ingenious scheme of revenge. Its certainty could

almost be depended upon. But still there were at least two points in the balance against the plotters—Bob's wonderful courage in the face of danger and the element of chance, which, after all, is a powerful factor in this world.

Bob went to work with great coolness. He didn't tug away aimlessly at the cords, but carefully tested the degree of resistance in those that held his wrists.

The result was not encouraging. Joe Bunker was an adept at tying knots. He meant them to stay tied. And the present instance was no exception to the rule.

The train now swung around Bald Eagle cliffs at a speed of forty miles an hour, and Bob caught a view of the canyon that cut the mighty mountain in two great spurs.

They swept over the bridge that spanned the crevasse with a roar like thunder, and the quickening clickety-clack of the rails beyond awoke the echoes of the wild pine-covered hillside.

The scenery all around was grand and impressive. Tourists from Europe never failed to travel over the Round Top Railroad in order to take in the beauties of its mountain division.

Bob had not made any perceptible progress toward freedom, when the train, curving around St. Anthony's Nose, took the lower trestle over the canyon at a 50-mile clip.

Then No. 33 jerked her nose in the opposite direction with a force that would have flung the boy into the depths below if he had not been tied.

As the engine steadied itself for a straighter run, Bob suddenly became conscious that his bonds were loosening from the constant tugging and twisting.

Every few seconds were adding speed to the runaway train.

The wind blew like a fierce gale in his face.

The telegraph poles along the mountainside followed each other in bewildering succession.

The well-known music of the rails was merging into a continuous hum that showed how swiftly they were flying along.

Jerked from side to side by the rocking locomotive, Bob found it a very trying matter to untie the hard knots that held him to the pilot.

But patience and perseverance will overcome all difficulties, even under such adverse circumstances as our young fireman was placed in.

At length only one knot remained between him and freedom, but it was a stubborn one, and before he had overcome it he was enveloped in the inky darkness of the lower tunnel, whence the train presently emerged, like a flying metour, among the foothills.

Two minutes later Bob was free and climbing back to the cab along the side of the swaying locomotive.

The first thing he did was to reverse the throttle a couple of notches. Then he slowly put on the engine brakes and let out sand on the rails.

That was all he could do toward checking the terrible speed of the heavy freight. The track now was little better than a series of long curves, with an occasional sharp one to vary the monotony, as it were, so that the flight of the train was like the sinuous progress of a big snake.

(To be continued)

BRIEF BUT POINTED

BOVINE OF BUTTER AS DAIRY AD AT SESQUI

It will be neither a Holstein cow nor a Guernsey cow, nor yet a Jersey cow, that will be the cow of cows at the dairy exhibit at the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition, opening in Philadelphia on June 1. It will be a cow made of rich, sweet, tasting butter—a cow that boasts of weighing a ton—and all that of butter. Years ago, fifty to be exact, at the Centennial Exposition in 1876, there was also a butter-cow on exhibit, but as handsome as this cow? No. Not if the plans now being considered by members of the dairy industry are carried out, who are contemplating this novel method of advertising their product.

RUSSIAN GIANT SENTENCED

"You are too clever to be at liberty in this country," Judge William Allen in General Sessions said to Julius Kaufman, a Russian giant, as he sentenced him to from five to ten years in Sing Sing for forgery. The Russia, who is 30 years old and 6 feet 4 inches tall, came here in 1923. When released he will be deported.

Kaufman was employed by the late Joseph Breitbart, a wrestler, as his partner in a vaudeville act. When Breitbart died several months ago Kaufman assumed his name and traveled about giving exhibitions of wrestling. Kaufman forged certified drafts on the Bank of England for funds to furnish a night club in West Fifty-third Street. Specifically he defrauded the Central Mercantile Bank of New York out of \$2,000.

ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC OCEANS

The Arctic Ocean is the larger. As we are still ignorant of land and water in the polar regions, it is only possible to give approximate figures for the extent of the oceans, for the position of coast lines is not known exactly enough to exclude possible hundred thousand square miles in estimates of the total areas. Speaking generally, we may say with confidence that water predominates in the unexplored area around the North Pole, and that it is very likely that new land of any great extent exists there. On the other hand, recent Antarctic exploration makes it practically certain that a great continent surrounds the South Pole. Of this total area considerably more than Sir John Murray's estimate in 1894, when he assigned to it an area of 3,500,000 square miles. It is possible that the Antarctic continent measures about 5,000,000 square miles.

FINDS TOMBS OF 3000 B. C.

An important discovery has been made at Bahrein, one of the group of Aval Islands in the Persian Gulf near the coast of Arabia, by Doctor MacKay of the British School of Archaeology. It is a cemetery of the third millennium B. C. Sepulchral mounds seven miles from Manaweh, which have been excavated, have revealed burial chambers and cells containing decayed wooden pegs so arranged as to suggest that the wardrobes of the dead were hung there for use in after life.

The large tombs showed signs of having been robbed of valuable objects. The small tombs were intact. Pottery, ivory, shells, arrowheads, and spearheads were found in them, but there was no trace of gold or silver. An ivory statuette of a woman shows high artistic talent.

Doctor MacKay says it is not impossible that Bahrein was the island where the Sumerians originated.

TESTING ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE

Five hundred white rats are being given intelligence tests to determine learning ability with respect to age in the Stanford University laboratories of psychology. The study is being financed by a man from the Carnegie Corporation of New York; \$12,000 to be extended over a period of three years. After the first year higher animals, such as the cat, will be studied.

The problem in the case of animals, according to Prof. Calvin P. Stone, who is conducting the experiments, is to test the ability to learn at successive stages of development. With rats, ages of 20, 30, 50, 100 and 200 days are used. Intermediate ages may be used later in further expansion of the work. Both the learning of new habits and the breaking of old ones are to be tested.

Two types of tests are being conducted by Professor Stone at present, the problem box and the maze. The problem box is a square box of wire screening from which a door leads to another box containing food. The door can be opened only by stepping upon a small platform projecting from the side of the box.

When the rat depresses this platform with his feet an electric current releases the door leading to the food. A rat is given this test once daily for twenty days and the time required for him to depress the platform is noted. Then a period of fifty days is allowed to elapse before the test is repeated to determine his retention of the habit formed. About 100 rats of each age are being tested.

The maze is one of the oldest devices used to test intelligence and learning ability. It consists of a labyrinthine passage containing many blind alleys, but only one direct path to the end, where food rewards the successful rat. A hungry animal is placed at the starting point and allowed to find his way to the exit. The number of false moves taken and the time required measure learning ability by this trial and error method. In addition to the 500 white rats now being used in these experiments, a breeding colony of about 100 animals is maintained.

A rough estimate of the relative rate of physical development in the rat and in man would be about 30 to 1. A rat one month old is equal in physical development to a child two and one-half years old. Results now at hand would seem to indicate that the ratio of mental development is probably more nearly to 50 to 1, according to Professor Stone.

Professor Stone began his present work June 1 and with one assistant worked seven hours daily during the summer. At present two research assistants are devoting four hours a day to the work.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

TWO BIRDS FROM ONE SHELL

Two canary birds from one egg is the trick of nature reported by Miss Addie L. Clark of Dallas, Tex. The mother bird started with three eggs, Miss Clark said. The bird broke one and she another, leaving the third egg, which produced two birdlings. The twins are normal and are among the best she has seen, Miss Clark said.

Twin birds are reported by bird fanciers to be very rare.

BURSTING STREET CAR AIRPIPE PINS CHICAGO WOMAN TO SEAT

Mrs. Adeline Slaick, twenty-four years old, was seriously injured when an airpipe, running beneath the flooring of a street car on which she was riding, suddenly burst, a section of the pipe being thrust through her body.

With one end of the pipe held fast in the woodwork of the seat, the woman was held prisoner until a fire department squad severed the pipe with an acetylene torch. Mrs. Slaick was taken to a hospital and specialists summoned to devise means of removing the pipe from her body.

LAST TRACES OF PARIS BASTILE

In the Place Bastille, with its famous column commemorating the storming of the fortress by the mob at the beginning of the French Revolution, was preserved the complete outline of the Bastille itself, exactly as it had stood in the Place and in the adjoining Rue St. Antoine. The site was marked with special paving stones that were put down in 1880.

Parisians are scrupulously careful of every little landmark of interest or beauty in their city, yet these special paving stones have almost disappeared as the result of frequent street mendings. Only a few remain. The Commission du Vieux Paris is now urging the authorities to restore the outline and all Paris hopes that they will agree to do so.

NEW 10-CENT STAMP FOR AIR MAIL IS OUT

A new air mail stamp of the value of 10 cents was placed on sale by the Post Office Department

February 15th. It is a new denomination in the airplane series, and has been issued primarily to pay the air mail postage for the various new contract routes which act as feeders to the main or trans-continental line.

The color of the new stamp is blue, similar to that of the special delivery stamp. It is the longest stamp ever issued by the department and is about half an inch in width. The central design is a map outlining the principal mountains and rivers of the country. There are two panels, one showing a mail air carrier traveling to the east and the other pointing westward.

The stamp was suggested to the department last October by an East Orange dealer who cited the necessity of a distinctive design so as to avoid confusion with the prevailing 8, 16 and 24 cent air mail stamps.

Advance sales of the new stamp were authorized in five postoffices, Chicago, Cleveland, Dearborn, Detroit and Washington. Several thousand copies were ordered in advance by New York dealers from the Philatelic Agency in Washington maintained by the Postoffice Department.

LAUGHS

"Do nuts grow on trees, father?" asked Charlie. "They do my son." "Well, on what tree does the doughnut grow?"

"So you got the opinions of two lawyers on the case. Were their opinions the same?" "Yes, \$25 each."

Woodchopper—"I seen a lot o' bear tracks 'bout a mile north o' here—big ones, too!" Hunter—"Good! Which way is south?"

Wife—"Wake up! There are thieves in the house." Husband—"Go down and show them your new bonnet and they won't waste any time looking for money."

She—"Didn't our honeymoon pass quickly, dearest?" He—"Well, I should say it did! Why, it seemed no time before I had spent all the money I had."

Miss Oldgirl—"Now, if I should find a man under my bed, I'd simply tell him to marry me or I'd shoot." Miss Petite—"Then you would simply be arrested for murder."

"I had a tough time delivering the mail yesterday," declared the postman. "How was that?" "Had a bulldog and a hunk of liver in the same delivery."

Wife—"That young man who calls on our daughter has me guessing." Husband—"How's that?" Wife—"I don't know whether he is economical or whether he has a grudge against the gas company."

"Why don't you raise something on that vacant lot—potatoes, for instance; or beans?" "I am raising good citizens," said the owner. "Don't you see those boys playing ball?"

The Passenger's Dog

Among the passengers of the ship *Indus*, bound from Calcutta to New York, was a quiet, blue-eyed girl of eighteen, named Ellen Sanders.

Her parents having recently died in the first-mentioned city, she was now on her way to the home of an elderly aunt, living in Boston, Mass.

The girl had no friend to take with her to America except Noble—her late father's favorite dog—which the captain of the vessel had permitted her to bring aboard his craft, to accompany her on the passage.

He had informed her, however, that if the animal proved in any way to be a nuisance to his other passengers, he would have to shoot it.

It was by no means a handsome dog.

It was large, with a strong, shaggy body, shaped like a lion's, but its head was too long and its tail too short for perfect proportion.

Nevertheless, Ellen was much attached to this faithful quadruped.

The poor girl, although she had but a little money left after paying for her passage, gave a certain sum every day to have the dog furnished with a good supply of food.

On clear, sunshiny days, she would bring her sewing on deck, and there she would sit for hours, quietly plying her needle, with Noble by her side.

The loss of her parents had cast a look of melancholy over her fair face, but when any of the other ladies spoke to her, she endeavored to brighten up and seem cheerful.

As the vessel widened the distance between it and the shores it had left, some of the passengers began to make complaints to the captain of the dog.

At night the latter would frequently howl in a mournful manner, as if, knowing it was being carried further and further every moment from the land where its master was buried, it was grieving on that account.

Ellen had never heard the dog go on in this way before.

She did everything in her power to quiet it, but in vain.

"I am afraid I'll have to have the animal shot," remarked the captain one day to his first officer—a fine-looking fellow of twenty-three, named Henry Harding.

"I would not do that, sir, if I were you," said Harding. "The young lady seems to be very fond of the dog."

"I know it, but I can think of no other way, except by killing it, to rid the ship of the nuisance. If it were only I who was annoyed I would not mind it, but I am bound, in the interest of my employers, to do all I can to promote the comfort of my passengers."

"Would its noise be heard by them distinctly enough to give them annoyance, if we put the dog at night in the hold?"

"We can try it."

The experiment was made, only to prove a failure.

The passengers still complained.

Noble continued his howls, except when the craft was near some island it was passing; then the creature would bark in a loud, vehement man-

ner, as if remonstrating because this was not the shore where its master lay.

Although the readiness with which it detected the presence of land was natural to its species, yet there was something truly remarkable about this quickness of perception on the part of the dog.

In the midst of fog and darkness combined the creature would seem to know when it was near any shore.

"I am sorry," said the captain one day to Ellen, "but I shall have to give orders for your Noble to be shot, on account of his disturbing my passengers."

It was a cloudy, foggy day, the wind blowing almost a gale, driving the vessel along at a swift rate.

For several days previously the skipper had been unable to take observations to determine his exact latitude, etc., but he judged he was some miles to the south of the Island of Timor.

All the passengers, except the girl, were now below in the cabin. Heedless of the spray that occasionally swept the deck, she had come up to look at the foam-covered waves, as they roared and hissed about the ship.

The captain's remark seemed to strike her like a ball from a musket.

She became pale, staggered against the bulwarks, for a moment, looked as if the dread announcement had been her own death sentence.

Then tears rushed to her eyes as she put an arm about the neck of her dog, which was by her side.

"You cannot mean it, sir?" she said, in a voice half-choked with grief. "Surely you will not take his life?"

"You will remember I told you, when you proposed bringing the animal abroad, that such would have to be the case if he proved to be a nuisance," said the captain.

"Yes, yes, I remember," replied Ellen. "But Noble had always been so quiet a dog that I did not think there was the slightest danger of his disturbing anyone. I beseech you not to kill him, sir. He was my father's favorite," she added, in faltering voice, "and I would rather have you put me and Noble ashore somewhere than take the creature from me."

"I would not, of course, do that," answered the skipper; "that is, I would not put you and your dog ashore," he continued, seeing her eyes light up as if she misunderstood him. "But the animal must be shot!"

Henry Harding stepped up to the skipper, respectfully raising his cap to the young girl.

"I do not think, sir, if we should speak to the other passengers, and give them all the facts about Miss Sanders' dog, they would be willing to have the creature shot on their account. I am sure they would put up with a thousand annoyances from it rather than deprive the young lady of a creature rendered doubly dear to her from its having been her father's favorite."

Ellen gave the speaker a grateful glance from her tear dimmed eyes, and he wondered how the captain could hold to his resolution before this gentle, suffering girl.

But the skipper was not to be moved from his purpose by a woman's distress.

Although he was by no means a stern man, yet

when believing that duty required it, as he did in this case, he could be as firm as a rock.

"Of course," said Ellen, "I do not want the other passengers annoyed. I, therefore, ask you to set me and Noble ashore, and——"

The captain waved his hand impatiently.

"That is out of the question," he declared. "I am responsible for the safe transportation of my passengers to their destination as quickly as possible. Waiving all other considerations, my changing my course to put you on some island—perhaps where there are pirates and murderers—would cause a serious delay."

Then the girl, her tears flowing fast, threw both arms about the dog's neck, and pressing her cheek against its head, endeavored in vain to stifle her sobs.

"Shall I speak to the passengers, sir, about the dog?" inquired Harding of the captain.

"No," replied the latter. "They would say they did not want me to shoot it, but there would be complaints of the annoyance when we reached home, and it would perhaps end in my being deprived of my command. But I will tell you what I want you to do. Go below, get my gun, and then come up and shoot the dog."

"No, sir, I will not do the deed!" answered Harding, firmly.

"You refuse? Are you aware, sir, that this is mutiny?"

"I don't think it could be called so. I did not ship to shoot down a young lady's dog."

"Refuse, and I will have to put you in irons. I repeat that your disobedience is mutiny!"

"I do not think so and, as I do not deserve it, I will not submit to be ironed."

"We will see about that," said the captain angrily. "But the first thing to do is to get the dog out of the way."

He walked amidships, and gave to the boatswain the same order Harding had refused to obey.

Although the boatswain—a Portuguese—at once went into the cabin, and brought up the captain's double-barreled gun, yet he was disinclined to shoot the dog.

Just as he came on deck with the weapon, the animal, suddenly pricking up its ears, bounded away from its fair owner, and ran forward.

The wind had now increased to a gale, and the ship was driven along with great velocity.

Rolling and pitching, her motions perhaps disturbed the boatswain's aim, or perhaps the gun was purposely pointed away when the skipper ordered the man to fire at Noble.

It is certain although the Portuguese was not ten paces from the creature when he discharged the piece that the bullet went wide of its mark.

"Walk up to him, and put the muzzle against his head," said the skipper. "That's the surest way."

The boatswain advanced towards the dog, while poor Ellen, overwhelmed with grief, now also ran towards it, as if to protect the creature with her own person.

This spectacle moved Harding beyond control.

He bounded forward in time to confront the boatswain ere he could reach Noble.

"This is too much!" cried the enraged captain.

He ordered his second and third mates to help him seize his disobedient officer and put him in irons.

Harding would have resisted, and a struggle must have ensued, but for Ellen, who now sprang between the young man and his opponents.

"No, no! there must be no trouble on my account," she cried. "Gentlemen, I beg you not to quarrel."

The captain gave his boatswain a significant look, which the man readily understood.

As the second and third mates were between him and Harding, and as the skipper now moved around to the other side of the disobedient officer, the boatswain had a good chance to go and shoot the dog ere he could be interfered with.

He hurried to the knight-heads, placed the muzzle of the gun against the dog's head, and was about to reluctantly pull the trigger, when it struck him that the animal was acting in a peculiar manner.

"Why don't you fire?" roared the skipper to the Portuguese.

As he spoke the dog barked still louder; then he placed his fore-paws on the spritsail-yard, thrust his nose far out, and commenced to whine mournfully.

"I think he smells land," said the boatswain.

The others had, in fact, by this time been led to the same conclusion by the dog's manner, as he always acted this way when near any port.

"Hard-a-port!" roared the captain to the man at the wheel. "Square yards, there!"

The boatswain took advantage of the excuse thus afforded him for at least delaying the shooting of the dog.

He put the gun aside and ran to help work the ship.

The latter, with her yards squared, had scarcely fallen off, and forged along on her new course, when there was an exclamation of surprise and dismay from all the men at the fearful danger they had thus escaped.

Not fifteen fathoms from them they beheld what the thick mist had hitherto concealed, but which they were now near enough to see plainly—a line of low rugged rocks, which had previously borne directly ahead of the ship, and upon which she must have been hurled and shattered to pieces, but for the timely warning of the dog, Noble.

The warning had enabled the captain to keep off just in time to clear the extremity of the rugged reef, which his vessel passed at so short a distance that he fairly shuddered and turned pale to think of her narrow escape.

"You will not shoot my dog?" pleaded Ellen, anxiously.

"Shoot it? No! I would not kill your useful Noble for a million of dollars! He has saved my ship, and perhaps all of our lives."

With a glad, thankful cry, the young girl ran to her dog and embraced it, while smiles like sunshine chased the tears from her eyes.

The passengers in the cabin, when they learned what had happened, remonstrated with the skipper for having, even for a moment, entertained the design of shooting Noble.

They complained no more of the noise made by the animal.

Ellen felt very grateful to Harding for his championship in her behalf.

In due time she became better acquainted with him, and, finally, at the house of her aunt, she consented to be the young officers wife.

FROM EVERYWHERE

ACCUSED OF KILLING 53

A Warsaw dispatch tells of the arrest of a "Bluebeard" named Rutschuc, who is charged with killing fifty-three persons, mostly women and children, and including a priest named Majewski.

Rutschuc is alleged to have confessed that he lured his victims into the woods and killed them.

FARM POPULATION OF STATE DECLINED 10,000 LAST YEAR

Farm population in New York, including entire families, declined from 733,000 to 723,000 during 1925, according to figures made public by G. F. Warren of the New York State College of Agriculture. Mr. Warren drew his statistics from a survey of 4,384 farms.

During the year ending Feb. 1, 1926, about 30,000 men and boys left farming to take up other work and about 12,500 left other occupations to go to farming.

"At the present time," the report says, "there are only about 25,800 hired men on farms compared with 26,700 a year ago and with 77,000 in 1916. Farmers are more and more getting their work done by the use of mechanical power such as tractors, trucks, etc. and by exchanging work with their neighbors."

SEEK WEST INDIES HISTORY

H. E. Anthony, Curator of the Department of Mammals of the American Museum of Natural History, will sail for San Juan, Porto Rico, with a party of naturalists for an intensive study of the mammal life of the West Indies. The special objects of the study will be to discover facts about the ancient West Indian continent, of which the West Indian Islands appear to be surviving parts. The statement of the museum says:

"The West Indies have always been a fascinating field of study for zoologists, not only because of the interesting forms of life to be found there, but because of the problem of working out the ancient history of the islands themselves. There are just enough living forms on the islands to make one wonder how they ever arrived unless the islands were joined to the mainland."

TURKEYS MAY GO

An experimental turkey farm has been established at Glendale, in the dry region of Arizona, by the United States Department of Agriculture to stimulate interest in turkey raising. The industry has declined greatly in the last twenty-five years. Scientific production methods are to be developed on this farm, and studies made of the turkey disease known as "blackhead," a mysterious malady which wipes out entire flocks.

In the event of failure of these experiments, other birds, which have been introduced from South America and Mexico, may ultimately replace the domestic turkey made famous as an offering of Thanksgiving by the early Pilgrims. One of these is the South American ocellated

turkey, which has plumage like a peacock. Another is the chacalaca turkey from Mexico and Honduras.

The domesticated turkey is now heading toward extinction. Breedig stocks have decreased from 6,500,000 birds in 1900 to around 3,500,000 birds. New England raises scarcely enough to meet local demands.

Farms in the East have grown them usually as sidelines, individual flocks rarely exceeding 100 turkeys. In parts of Southern California turkeys are herded like sheep on the open range in flocks of 1,000 or more, tended by men on horseback.

AUSTRALIA

The Commonwealth of Australia is following very closely in its federation and otherwise the example of the United States. It has made another very decisive step in that Americanization by imitating the example of this country in establishing a political capital apart from any of the commercial metropolises.

The continent of Australia is a great deal bigger than the United States of America was before the Louisiana Purchase. It has 2,950,000 square miles of area, where we have about 3,000,000 outside of Alaska and the insular possessions.

Australia indulges in fond hopes that their country will have a growth like our own and become in the Antipodes the replica, at least, of the United States. The main trouble seems to be, like it is in Texas, deficiency in water.

After 26 years of agitation they have finally settled upon a place, which they call Canberra, about 100 miles from Sydney. Work is now going on there. A little fun is had from the fact that Canberra was the name of a distinctive bird in that country called the "laughing jackass," as it has a note similar to the bray of that animal. Its principal food is supposed to be fish and snakes. The people who named the capital were ignorant of this fact for several years after they had imposed the name. The building now in course of erection resembles much the plan upon which Washington has been built, and the main difference in the Government is going to forestall speculators and land grabbers by not selling any of the land. It will retain possession of the land, but lease it out to prospective buyers.

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CURRENT NEWS

WESTCHESTER BIRDS FED

Distribution of 900 pounds of cereal food through Westchester County to prevent pheasants and quail from starving was completed by the staff of Game Warden Edward Townsend.

Scratch food, including corn and meal for the quail and many ears of corn tied to bushes, where it can be seen by the pheasants, was distributed.

The food was provided by the Southern New York Fish and Game Association of Westchester County.

TY COBB, EXPERT BASE STEALER, GOOD AT NABBING STEALERS, TOO

Ty Cobb, baseball's greatest pilferer when it comes to bases, has discovered that he can catch 'em stealing, too. He called in the police to search the home of a former Negro servant when he missed a valuable pair of cuff links and in the man's house they found \$150 worth of table linen and other articles from Cobb's home at Augusta, Me., which had been missed off and on for five years.

The man and his wife, vigorously asserting their innocence, were lodged in jail charged with larceny.

UTE BRAVE MUST WEAR GARB OF SQUAW AS PUNISHMENT

Augustie, a six-foot Ute Indian buck, for 38 years has worn the garb of a squaw and has been entirely ignored by fellow males of his tribe—because in 1887 he was a "conscientious objector" and refused to take part in a tribal raid.

Augustie now is more than 80 years old, but he will remain a "squaw" for the rest of his life.

His sentence never will be revoked, and there is no chance for a parole, claim the present tribal leaders, who succeeded old Chief Colorow a score of years ago.

It was Colorow who pronounced sentence "back to the squaws" upon Augustie, who had declined to accompany Colorow on his last raid against the "palefaces" near Meeker.

NICOTINE TRAP

From the land of pipes comes another ingenious idea to keep your smoke clean and cool. A British inventor has made a new pipe with a trap for nicotine. The pipe stem is elongated, running past the bottom of the bowl. Fitting to this is a small metal tube perforated at the bottom and covered with a wooden tube.

A tubular chamber screws into the bottom of the wooden tube and into this chamber flows all the nicotine and saliva. Because it is kept so far away from the pipe bowl, the nicotine, it is claimed, cannot be drawn into the mouth, for it would have to traverse the length of this small metal tube and be drawn through the small perforations.

GOLD RUSH STIRS ONTARIO

Enthusiastic reports on the gold discoveries in the Red Lake district in Northwestern Ontario are reaching Toronto. The influx of prospectors

have been steady since the first claims were staked out last fall, and preparations at various points indicate that the spring opening of the water routes may see a gold rush of proportions comparable to that of 1898 in the Klondike.

It is reported that claims not yet surveyed or assayed have sold for as high as \$50,000. Major C. J. A. Cunningham Dunlop of Haileybury, Ontario, a veteran Northern prospector, has returned from Red Lake with a description of a large vein of visible gold, mostly free from milling ore.

The Red Bank country, about 1,200 miles northwest of Toronto and about 50 miles east of the Manitoba boundary, is 140 miles from the nearest railway, and is wild and unsurveyed. Access to the region is now hampered by winter conditions, and the journey is made only by dog team.

MAKE VIOLINS AND SHIPS FROM MATCH STICKS

What can be made out of match sticks? The answer is a wide variety of articles, useful, ornamental and diverting. The magazine Science and Invention has evolved a new scheme by which "shut-ins" and others may occupy their odd time in an interesting, novel and not wholly useless manner. The magazine is conducting what it terms a "matchcraft contest." The conditions are that more than 90 per cent. of the materials used in articles constructed must be match sticks. Many articles, some showing ingenuity in design, have resulted from the contest that is only a month old, the things submitted coming from all parts of the United States and the handicraft of persons of all ages of both sexes.

Some articles, which are on exhibition at the office of the magazine, 53 Park Place, are a violin, in which 10,000 match sticks were used and which is not unmusical; a radio loud speaker, equally practical; a ukelele, scale models of ships, bridges, wagons, trolley cars and trains; the model of a completely equipped radio station, with a miniature piano, microphone, electric standing lamp and other furnishings; a wide variety of clocks, pictures designed from match sticks, a checkerboard about four inches square, with the pieces made from the heads of matches; a compass, mathematically true, and any number of other things that in their workmanship show originality, patience and in many cases great skill.

One rule of the contest, to insure safety, is that safety matches must be used. The inventor of the game is H. Gernsback, publisher of Science and Invention, who says there is no commercial purpose back of the plan, which, he asserts, may be compared to the cross-word puzzle as a means of occupying leisure time.

The contest is to continue for a year for prizes totaling \$5,000. The winner of the first month's prize, \$100, was Carl Lurtz of Brooklyn for the violin; second prize, \$75, E. Russell Vass, 17 years old, of Chicago, loud speaker. Sixteen prizes are awarded monthly and the winners receive their models back after the awards are made.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

HEART OF DEAD CHICKEN BEATS IN LABORATORY FOR THIRTEEN YEARS

Kept alive by artificial methods, a bit of tissue from a chicken's heart has been growing in the laboratory of Dr. Alexis Carrel since 1913, says "Popular Mechanics." It has to be pared every day, for its natural tendency is to double its bulk every twenty-four hours, and had it been allowed to grow without restriction since the day the experiment began it would have covered an area as large as New York City, scientists say.

Motion pictures of the growth of tissue have been made. The film shows in a few minutes what occurs in twenty-four hours, an amazing display of the marvels of biology. So long as the tissue is properly cared for, it is believed it will not die.

VALUE OF WORLD'S DIAMONDS ESTIMATED AT \$5,000,000,000

According to a gem expert, the total value of all the diamonds in the world today is \$5,000,000,000, and a large share of them are in the United States, where about 50 per cent. of the annual supply and of other precious stones is consumed, says "Popular Mechanics."

The world's gold supply is placed at less than \$8,000,000,000, and most of this is also in the United States at the present time. The emerald, the oldest of the precious gems, and the ruby often rival the diamond in value, although the latter has become a standard and a favorite. Ruby mines in Burma have been worked for centuries, and their output during the last thirty-five years is placed at \$10,000,000.

JOHN HANCOCK, MASSACHUSETTS

Among the many striking characters of the fifty-six Signers of the Declaration of Independence, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of which will be celebrated by the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition opening in Philadelphia

June 1, 1926, is John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress and the first to affix his signature to the document.

He was a graduate of Harvard, a wealthy man and a courtly figure; gold and silver adorned his garments, and on public occasions his carriages, horses and servants in livery emulated the splendor of the nobility. His mansion displayed the magnificence of the courtier, rather than the simplicity of a Republican. Rivaling the British in the gorgeousness of his attire, John Hancock was in striking contrast to the colonists who affected a plain mode of dress. Because of these tendencies doubts of his patriotic integrity were circulated.

John Hancock was an eloquent orator, and in commemoration of the Boston Massacre he delivered such a stirring speech no doubt was left in the mind of anyone as to his perfect patriotism. Hancock from this time became as odious to the royal governor and his adherents as he was dear to the Republican party. By the speech he put his life in jeopardy.

The British were determined to capture him, and we all know what his fate would have been had their efforts proved successful. John Hancock was spared to render his country splendid service. In promoting the liberties of his country he unstintingly expended great wealth and was willing to make many sacrifices. At the time the American Army was besieging Boston, the destruction of Boston was considered. By the execution of these plans Hancock's whole fortune would have been sacrificed. Yet he immediately acceded to the measure and declared his readiness to surrender his all should his country require it.

His memory as one of the immortal signers of the Declaration, who pledged for their country's sake their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honors, is a cherished ideal in the hearts of all Americans.

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